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AN

# **Inquiry**

INTO THE CONSEQUENCES

OF

NEGLECTING TO GIVE THE PRAYER BOOK WITH THE BIBLE.

INTERSPERSED WITH

## **R E M A R K S**

ON SOME LATE SPEECHES AT CAMBRIDGE,

*AND OTHER IMPORTANT MATTER*

RELATIVE TO

*The British and Foreign Bible Society.*

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## AN INQUIRY, &c.

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**W**HOWER objects to the British and Foreign Bible Society is invariably asked, Where is the *harm* of giving away a *Bible*? I will answer therefore by saying, *None whatever*. On the contrary, the more widely the Scriptures are disseminated, the greater in all respects must be the good produced.

Having answered *this* question, and, as I hope, to the satisfaction of every member in the society, I beg leave to ask in my turn; Where is the *harm* of giving away a *Prayer Book*? Of course I propose this question only to *those* members of the Society, who are also members of the *Church*. For I have explicitly declared, both in the Sermon at St. Paul's and in the Address to the Senate, that I have no desire to interfere, either with the religious opinions, or the religious conduct of the *Dissenters*. An attempt to impose the Liturgy on men, who from principle *reject it*, would be a violation of that religious liberty which I sincerely hope will ever be maintained in this country. I neither expect therefore, nor *desire*, unless it is their own *voluntary* act, that Dissenters should either give or receive our Book of Common Prayer. I am addressing myself to Churchmen in their intercourse with Churchmen, such as the Clergyman of a parish has with his parishioners. And, as the Liturgy is the Book which *distinguishes* Churchmen, I may certainly ask of *them*, Where can

be the harm, when we give away a Bible, of giving *also* a Prayer Book? As I think no real Churchman would say that there *is*, he cannot consistently object to those, who *recommend* their joint distribution. Secondly, I ask the Churchman, whether it is not *useful*, when we give away a Bible, to give also the Book of Common Prayer, not as a *Corrective*, a name lately given it by the Dean of Carlisle,<sup>1</sup> but as a proper *Companion* for the Bible? Does it not contain devotional exercises composed in the *true spirit* of the Scriptures? Is it not the Book, which we hear constantly at Church; and is it not equally designed for our meditations in the closet? The *usefulness* then of this book to every Churchman, I think, no Churchman can *deny*. He cannot therefore, at least not with consistency, complain of those, who object to the *withholding* of this usefulness; who object to the *omission* of giving the Liturgy; or, in other words, who object to the distribution, on the part of Churchmen, of the Bible *alone* or without the *Liturgy*. Thirdly, I ask the Churchman, whether it is not *necessary*, when he gives Bibles to the poor, (I do not mean among Dissenters, as I have repeatedly declared) to provide them at the same time with a *Prayer Book*? Ought it not to be used by *every* Churchman? and can he join in the service of the Church *without* it? Can it therefore be a matter of *indifference*, whether the poor of our establishment are provided with *Prayer Books*? Do we perform our *duty*, do we properly provide for their *religious instruction*, if we provide them only with the Bible, and leave them *unprovided* with the Prayer Book? In this case, the Rubric and the Canons have very unnecessarily enforced the learning of the *Church Catechism*. When we further consider, that there is at present hardly a town, or even a village, which is not visited by illiterate teachers, who expound the Bible with more confidence than the most profound theologian, it becomes *doubly* necessary, if we would preserve the poor of the establishment in the religion of their fathers, to provide them with a safe-guard against the delusions of *false interpretation*. And what better safeguard can we offer than the Book of Common Prayer, which contains the doctrines of the Bible, according to its *true* exposition; in

<sup>1</sup> In his speech at the Town Hall, on Thursday the 12th of December.



which those doctrines are applied, throughout the prayers and collects, to the best purposes of religion, and are condensed in a manner, which is intelligible to all, in that excellent formulary the Church Catechism? Under these circumstances, to leave the poor, who without assistance cannot *understand* the Scriptures, as the itinerant preachers themselves admit by their own practice, to leave, I say, the poor under such circumstances, to be tossed about by every wind of doctrine, which they *must* be, unless provided with that authorised exposition of the Scriptures, which is contained in the Liturgy, and which every honest Churchman must believe to be the *true* one, is, at least in *my* judgment (I speak with deference to the judgment of others) such a dereliction of our duty as Churchmen, that I little expected to hear Clergymen, within the precincts of the University, reprehend a Professor of Divinity, because he contended, that the Prayer Book should be distributed with the Bible.

But though I certainly did not *expect* it, I am still ready to confess, that if it is *really blameable* to object to the distribution, on the part of Churchmen, of the Bible *alone*, or unaccompanied with the *Liturgy*, the modern Bible Society can require no further vindication. For if the proposition, which I have hitherto ventured to maintain, is not only untenable, but a fit subject for *reproach*, it necessarily follows, that the omission of the Prayer Book in the distribution of the Bible, is not only *allowable*, but *laudable*. Now, that I *have* been reproached, and *bitterly* reproached, for asserting that Churchmen should not content themselves with distributing only *Bibles* to the poor, is a matter of notoriety. To say nothing of other places, where I have been attacked on this account, I need only appeal to what was said at the public Meeting in Cambridge for the formation of an Auxiliary Society, especially in the speeches of Dr. Milner and Dr. Clarke.<sup>1</sup> Strange, therefore, as it may appear, that a Professor of Divinity should have now to defend himself, in his own University, against the charge of

<sup>1</sup> The Speeches to which I allude were delivered in the Town Hall of Cambridge, on December 12, 1811, and were printed in the Cambridge Chronicle of December 20, of course with the knowledge and approbation of the speakers.

pleading for the Liturgy, yet as I am put on my defence, I must request to be heard, before I am finally condemned.

The first person who particularly complained of the objection to the distribution of the Bible alone, that is, as repeatedly explained, without the Prayer Book, was Dr. Clarke. “Is the distribution of the Bible *alone* (says Dr. Clarke) detrimental to the interests of the establishment? Have we forgot that we are Englishmen? Have we forgot that we are PROTESTANTS? What would Latimer and Ridley and Chillingworth have thought or said, had they lived unto this day to bear testimony to such a declaration? As the only answer to it, I, as a member, and as a minister, of the Church of England, do not hesitate to declare, so soon as it shall be proved that the distribution of the Bible alone is hostile to the interests of the established church, then, and then only, be that church subverted.” Such are the grounds, on which a Churchman justifies the distribution of the Bible *alone*, or unaccompanied with the *Liturgy*: and they deserve particular examination, not as being the sentiments of an *individual*, but as being the sentiments of a *party*. This is evident, not only from the general applause with which the speech was received, but from the circumstance, that the same sentiments are now entertained by very respectable writers, and are even conveyed through the channel of the public papers.

Before I examine the grounds, on which my objection to the omission of the Liturgy is now arraigned, I beg leave to call the attention of the reader to the FACT, that the omission of the Liturgy, in the distribution of the Bible, is justified, and justified by *Churchmen*. And I request the reader to keep this FACT in remembrance, because we shall find it of great importance, when the views of the Society are more particularly examined.

## II.

I acknowledge that the arguments for the distribution of the Bible *alone* are so specious, so popular, so apparently in the spirit of true *Protestantism*, while the arguments for the contrary lie so concealed from the public view, and are now so confidently as-

served to savour of Popery,<sup>1</sup> that they are equally difficult to explain, and dangerous to propose. Believing, however, as I do, that there is a fallacy in the arguments of those who oppose me, and conscious of the rectitude of my intentions, I tremble not at obstacles, which present themselves on every side. If it were now a question, as it was at the Reformation, whether the *Bible* should be distributed or not, men might justly exclaim to those who *withheld* it; can the *Bible* be injurious to the real interest of the Church! But this is NOT the question, as every one must know, who argues against me. There were channels in abundance for the distribution of the *Bible*, long before the existence of the modern Society. And I challenge my opponents to declare, whether *they* have labored harder, than I have done, to promote the *study* of it.<sup>2</sup> But it is urged, if you still require that the *Bible*, however extensively you may be willing to distribute it, should be accompanied by the *Liturgy*, you must certainly suspect, that there is danger to the established Church from the distribution of the *Bible alone*.<sup>3</sup> Here let me ask, whether the *Bible itself* is not capable

<sup>1</sup> "They are such, as were used by *Papists* at the Reformation, and can only be advanced by those, who think the Church of England cannot stand the test of the word of God." This passage is taken from a Letter in the Shrewsbury Chronicle, signed, "A member of the Established Church."—N. B. I have been informed that there is another Letter in the Shrewsbury Chronicle to the same purport: but I have not yet seen it.

<sup>2</sup> That the reader, however, may judge of the *Christian Spirit* which animates some of the advocates of this Society, at the very time when they are boasting of their *promotion* of Christianity, I need only quote the following passage from a Letter, which first appeared in the Suffolk papers, was reprinted in Cambridge with a superscription *alluding to my Address to the Senate*, and was very generally distributed in Cambridge within a few days after that Address. The author of this Letter, speaking of the auxiliary Societies now forming in different parts of the kingdom, says, "And yet to these Societies there are they, who *dare* to object. I say *dare*, because circulated as the New Testament has been described to be, without tract or comment, they who oppose *them*, oppose the circulation of the *word of God*, as originally delivered forth, and would have probably opposed *our Saviour himself*, had they lived in his time."—On such language and conduct, it is unnecessary to make an observation.

<sup>3</sup> It can be hardly necessary to repeat what I have already explained, that, when I contend for the distribution of the *Liturgy* in company with the *Bible*, I mean only<sup>2</sup> among *members of the Church of England*. It would indeed be *useless*

of *perversion*, whether the *best of Books* may not be misapplied to the *worst of purposes*? Have we not inspired authority for answering this question in the affirmative? St. Peter himself, speaking of the Epistles of St. Paul, said, "In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are *unlearned and unstable* wrest as they do also the *other scriptures*, unto their own destruction." Would St. Peter, if he had lived in the present age, have thought this admonition *less* necessary, than in the age of the Apostles? Can Churchmen, therefore, who know that *one party* wrests the scriptures, by the aid of false interpretation, into authority for the rejection of the *Trinity and the Atonement*, that *another party* wrests them into authority for the rejection of the *Sacraments*, that *other parties* again, on the authority of the same Bible, prove other doctrines, which are at variance with their own, think it *unnecessary*, when they distribute Bibles to the poor, who are incapable, without assistance, of judging for themselves, and who alone are the objects of *gratuitous* distribution, can Churchmen, I say, under such circumstances, think it *unnecessary* to accompany the Bible with the Liturgy, in which the doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, the Sacraments, with the other doctrines of our Church, are delivered as *contained* in the Bible? It is not the Bible *itself*, but the *perversion* of it, the *wresting* of the Scriptures (as St. Peter expresses it) by the "unlearned and unstable," with which England now swarms, whence the danger proceeds. And this danger must increase in proportion as we *neglect* the means of *counteracting* it. But if we neglect to provide the poor of the establishment with the Book of Common Prayer, as well as with the Bible, we certainly neglect the means of preventing their seduction from the Established Church. The Dissenters *remain* Dissenters, because they use not the Liturgy; and Churchmen will *become* Dissenters, if they likewise neglect to use it with the Bible. Have the persons to whom Bibles are *gratuitously* distributed, either the leisure, or the inclination, or the ability, to weigh the arguments for *religious* opinions? Do they possess the knowledge and the judgment, which are necessary to direct men

to give away a book to those whose religious principles must induce them to *reject* it, whether those persons lived in England or abroad.

in the *choice* of their religion? Must they not *learn* it therefore from their instructors? And can there be a *better* instructor, in the opinion of Churchmen, than the Book of Common Prayer?

But the Bible *alone* contains all things, which are necessary for *Salvation*: and to assert the contrary is to argue in the spirit, not of a Protestant, but of a Papist!—This position is indisputably true; it is the very *basis* of Protestantism; and no Protestant, as far as I know, has ever contended that any doctrine should be received as an article of Faith, which is not contained in the *Bible*. But have not Christians of *every age and nation* been at variance on the question, what doctrines are contained in the Bible? If you ask a Trinitarian why he *receives* the doctrine of the Trinity, he will answer, Because it is contained in the Bible. If you ask a Unitarian, why he *rejects* that doctrine, he will answer that it is *not* contained in the Bible. On the authority of the Bible, the Church of England admits only *two* Sacraments in opposition to the Church of Rome, while the Quakers, in opposition to the Church of England, admit no Sacrament at all. From the same Bible, the Calvinist proves the doctrine of *absolute* decrees, and the Arminian, the doctrine of *conditional* salvation. On the Bible, the Church of England grounds the doctrine of the Atonement, which, with reference to the same authority, is discarded by the modern Socinians. If you ask a Churchman why it is right to *kneel* at the altar, when he receives the sacrament, he will answer that it is an act of reverence due from every Christian to the institutor of that holy rite, at whose name, it is declared in scripture that “every knee should bow.” If you ask a Presbyterian, he will answer with the same authority before him, that kneeling at the sacrament is an act of idolatry.

Put then a *Bible alone* into the hands of the illiterate, and leave them to their own judgment, without Liturgy or other assistance, and determine what articles of faith they shall adopt. If a Churchman withholds the *Liturgy*, when he gives a Bible to the poor, because the Bible *alone* contains all things which are necessary for salvation, he cannot consistently interfere with his *own* instruction: for if the *Liturgy* is not wanted to explain the Bible, it would be the height of presumption for a *Churchman* to suppose that the instruction of an *individual* could be wanted. Nor

would men in this case give the Bible *alone* : they would accompany it at least with a *verbal* explanation. And can any sober-minded Churchman really believe, that by putting the Bible, under the circumstances above described, into the hands of the illiterate, they will secure them from the seductions of *false interpretation*, and the consequent defection from the *established church*? I know, indeed, that a very respectable writer, whose sentiments on this subject are on many accounts important, expresses himself as follows: "I should, as a member of the church, be very sorry to think that the devout study of the Scriptures could lead to the disregard of our Liturgy; on the contrary, I should hope that it would produce a more general acknowledgment of its excellence, as it originally, at the period of the Reformation, led, through the blessing of divine Providence, to its establishment. The Bible; says Chillingworth, and the *Bible only*, is the religion of the Protestant: it is the sole basis of the Church of England, and the only one, on which you, I am sure, would wish to place it."<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly, the Bible is the *sole basis* of the Church of England; and this respectable writer does me justice, in believing that it is the *sole basis* for which I contend, notwithstanding some late insinuations to the contrary. Equally true is the *general* proposition, that the *Bible only* is the religion of the *Protestant*. But are all Protestants *alike* in their religion? Have we not Protestants of the Church of England, Protestants of the Church of Scotland, Protestants who hold the confession of Augsburg? Have we not both Arminian and Calvinistic Protestants? Are not the Moravians, the Methodists, the Baptists, the Quakers, and even the Jumpers, the Dunkers, and Swedenborgians, all *Protestants*?

<sup>1</sup> This is part of a Letter, which was originally a private communication to me from the Right Hon. N. Vansittart, containing remarks on my Address to the Senate, but was published by the Author, at the desire of our Chancellor, who is Patron of the Auxiliary Society in Cambridge. This Letter derives additional importance from the author's being a Vice President of the Society, and from the general circulation which the friends of the Society gave to it in Cambridge. Though I have the misfortune to view the British and Foreign Bible Society in a different light from Mr. Vansittart, I must express my acknowledgments for the candor and liberality, which pervades the whole Letter. It is written in all the amiable spirit of a sincere and benevolent Christian. Let other advocates of this Society take a lesson from Mr. Vansittart.

Since, therefore, Protestantism assumes so many different forms, men speak quite *indefinitively*, if they speak of it without explaining the particular *kind*, which they mean. When I hear of a Swedish or a Danish Protestant (namely, one who belongs to the church established in those countries) I know that it means a person, whose religion is the *Bible only*, but the Bible, as expounded in the *Confession of Augsburg*. When I hear of a Protestant of the Church of Holland, I know that it means a person, whose religion is the *Bible only*, but the Bible as expounded in the *Synod of Dort*. In like manner, a Protestant of the Church of England, is a person whose religion is the *Bible only*, but the Bible as expounded in the *Liturgy and Articles*.<sup>1</sup> How, therefore, can we know, if we give the Bible only, what *sort* of Protestantism will be deduced from it? And if we believe, that the Bible is more *correctly* expounded in our formulary of faith than in any other, do we act rightly if we *withhold* that formulary, and thus expose men to the danger of coming to conclusions, which we must consistently believe to be *false*? I should be as sorry, as Mr. Vansittart to think that the study of the Scriptures should lead to a disregard of our Liturgy. And I should

<sup>1</sup> Hence it is, that, by the laws of this country, a Churchman *never* qualifies, by declaring his assent only to the *Bible*. This *general* assent is admitted only from Protestant *Dissenters*, when they apply for a licence to preach. All that is necessary to be ascertained in respect of *them*, is, that they are Protestants, but *not* of the Church of England. What *kind* of Protestants, in other respects, they may be, the legislature does not inquire, and is therefore satisfied with the *general* declaration of their assent to the *Bible*. But when a *Churchman* qualifies, he qualifies as a Protestant of a *particular kind*. His test, therefore, is not the *Bible alone*, which is the religion of *all* Protestants. By the laws of this country, the *Liturgy* is the great criterion of the Churchman. The Clergy are required by the Canons to subscribe to the Liturgy, and also to the Articles. But *all* Churchmen, both Clergy and Laity, appeal to the *Liturgy*, as a proof of their Churchmanship. In the two Universities, where it is *especially* necessary to provide for the support of the established religion, not only Heads of Houses and Professors, but every Fellow, whether in orders or not, is bound, by the Act of Uniformity, under no less a penalty than the voidance of his election, to declare by his subscription, that he will conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England, as now *by Law established*. For similar reasons, every *Schoolmaster* is required to make the same declaration. And even they who qualify for *civil* offices, are required, under a similar penalty, not only to attend the public service of the Church, within three months after their appointment, but to join in the most solemn of its rites, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, after the manner and form prescribed in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

equally rejoice, if that study led *all* men to the *same* conclusions, as it led our English Reformers. But where is the use of rejoicing at an expectation which we know can never be realized? If the devout study of the Bible *necessarily* led to an approbation of the Liturgy, why is it still rejected by the *Dissenters*? And how are men to know what the excellences of the Liturgy *are*, if the Bible *only* is put into their hands? How can they make the comparison if they have not *both* Bible and Prayer Book? Suppose, however, it were *true*, that the study of the Bible, unaccompanied by the Liturgy, would lead all men to the same conclusions as it led our English Reformers, there can surely be no objection to put into their hands, at the *same time* with the Bible, a book which will lead them to those conclusions *at once*.<sup>4</sup> But since we know by experience, that the study of the Bible does *not* lead all men to the same conclusions, or there would not be so many Protestants who *differ* from the established church, may it not be said without reproach, that *Churchmen* should not content themselves with the distribution of the *Bible alone*?

### III.

But, says Dr. Clarke, in language, applauded by the assembly, and repeated with approbation by the distinguished advocate of this Society, "Have we forgot that we are *Protestants*? What would Latimer, and Ridley, and Chillingworth, have thought or said, had "they lived unto this day to bear testimony to such a declaration?" What *Chillingworth* would have said shall be examined hereafter.

<sup>4</sup> The "Member of the established Church" already quoted in Note 1, p. 103, asks, indeed, whether uniformity of doctrine really is promoted by accompanying the Bible with the Liturgy? Perhaps not so completely as might be wished. But is this a reason for *omitting* the Liturgy when we give a Bible? Because it fails in *some* cases to do the good intended, shall we neglect it *in all*? If, even *with* the Liturgy, the effect is incomplete, what must be the case *without* it?—I take the present opportunity of informing this anonymous writer, who plainly shews to what party he belongs, when he speaks of the Bishop of Lincoln *contradicting* the doctrines of the Church, that though he had full liberty to examine my Address to the Senate, without putting his name, so far as relates to the *subject matter*, it is no less cowardly than ungenerous to attempt (as he has done in more than one passage) to traduce the *character of the author*. Such conduct does no honor either to himself or to the Society which he defends. When the *argumentum ad contumeliam* is wanted, one may always suspect a deficiency of the *argumentum ad judicium*.



But it requires *no* examination to discover, what Latimer and Ridley, what Cranmer and Hooper, what our great REFORMERS would have said, could they have foreseen that a Professor of Divinity in an English University would be publicly censured by *Churchmen and Clergymen*, within the precincts of that University, for urging the distribution of a Book, which *they* composed, and which contains the doctrines for which *they* died? It is not the distribution of the *Bible* to the poor and illiterate, (the only objects of *gratuitous* distribution) which exposes men to the danger of being seduced from the established faith, and is consequently injurious to the welfare of the Church; the danger arises from the *neglect* to give them also the *Liturgy*. And it is a gross perversion of my meaning, to ascribe to the *presence of the former*, what I ascribe only to the *absence of the latter*.<sup>1</sup> But the objection would be less *popular*, if they *directly* denied the utility of the Prayer Book. I can make great allowance for the effervescence produced by an ardent desire to become a *genuine Protestant*. But let not men suppose that they become *better Protestants* by becoming *worse Churchmen*. Let them not suppose that, because the Bible contains all things which are necessary for *salvation*, they do all things which are wanted on *their* parts, if they give not the Liturgy in aid of religious instruction. Men who entertain *this* notion, entertain it not in *conformity*, as they suppose, with the conduct of our Reformers, but in direct *opposition* to their conduct.

When our Reformers contended, and *properly* contended, for the *Bible alone*, they contended in opposition to those *other* sources of

<sup>1</sup> In a similar strain, the anonymous writer above quoted from the Shrewsbury Chronicle exclaims, "What, the *Bible* knock down the *Church*!"—No. It is not the *Bible*, that (in the elegant language of this writer) will knock down the Church; but the Church will be *undermined* if we neglect the *Liturgy*. Without the Liturgy, we *cease* to be Churchmen, and become Dissenters. We give up the very book which *makes* us Churchmen. If, by the term "Church," men understand the *universal Church*, or the whole body of Christians dispersed throughout the world, it is true that *our Liturgy* is not necessary for its support. *Whatever* be the form, under which Christianity is professed, it still belongs to the *universal church*. But when we speak of a *particular church*, as the church of *England*, that particular church must have something to *distinguish* it, beside that which is common to *all churches*. That our legislators are of this opinion is evident from Note p. 107. And such was the importance attached to the Liturgy by the Long Parliament, as the criterion, and the bulwark of the church, that, when they resolved to overturn the *latter*, they forbade the use of the *former* even in private.

authority, which were recognized by the Church of Rome. Without denying the validity of those other sources, such as tradition, and the decrees of Councils, they could never have secured to the Bible *such* an interpretation as they themselves believed to be true. For this purpose, it was previously necessary to divest it of the glosses which perverted its real meaning. But did they *stop* here, and leave the Bible without *any* interpretation? No. One of the first steps, which were taken by Luther and Melancthon, was to compose a *Confession of Faith*, which, in their opinion, was founded on a *true interpretation* of the Bible. This Confession was afterwards improved into the Confession of Augsburg, which became, and still remains, the standard of Lutheran faith. Our own Reformers acted in the same manner. Though they asserted that the Bible alone contained all things which were necessary to salvation, they did not leave the *interpretation* of it to mere chance. From a knowledge of *former* perversions, they justly apprehended perversions of it in *future*. Nor was it possible, without devising some means of security, to prevent a relapse into those very errors, which they sacrificed their lives to remove. They deemed it necessary, therefore, to employ that knowledge of the Scriptures, which they so eminently possessed, in composing a system of doctrines, which are really founded on the Bible, when *rightly understood*.

But, says the Dean of Carlisle, (after properly observing that "our Liturgy itself owes its establishment to the free use of the Bible among the people") "I greatly mistake, if, among the numerous errors of the Church of Rome, there exists a more dangerous tenet, than that the Holy Scriptures themselves must be tried at the bar of the traditions of fallible men." Now, with great deference to the Dean of Carlisle, I would humbly ask him, whether we try the Scriptures by our Liturgy and Articles, or the Liturgy and Articles by the Scriptures? As far as my reading extends, I know of no Protestant, from the Reformers themselves to the Divines of the present age, who have had recourse to the *former* kind of trial. At least, I can answer for myself, that I have always made the *Scriptures* the test, by which I have tried the Liturgy and Articles: and the more frequently I have tried them by that test, the more firmly I have been persuaded, that the doctrines contained in them are *warranted* by Scripture. It is on this ground, and on this ground

only, that I recommend their distribution in *company* with the Bible, not as a "*corrective*," as Dr. Milner calls it, but as a *safeguard* against the *false interpretations* to which men are now exposed on every side. Our Reformers themselves acted on the *same principle*. They did not withhold the Bible from general use, and say, "Here are the doctrines which are *decreed by the Church*." They laid it open to all men to compare it with the doctrines which they deduced; and they claimed the assent of the public to their *interpretation* of the Bible, on the ground of its *conformity* with the original. On the ground of this *conformity*, our Liturgy and Articles were afterwards sanctioned by the authority of Parliament, and were incorporated in the law of the land. No doubt, our Reformers were *fallible*, like other men. But the question is not, whether they were *fallible*, but whether they *failed*; not whether they *could not err*, but whether they *did* err. And I am sure the Dean of Carlisle will not assert that they *did* err, or he would not by his subscription, agreeably to the Act of Uniformity, have declared his "unfeigned assent and consent to *all and every thing* contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled the Book of Common Prayer." However desirous Dr. Milner may have been, to vindicate the distribution of the Bible *alone* by the Society, of which he is so zealous an advocate, however desirous, therefore, he might have been to hold out to public indignation a Professor, who contends for the distribution of the Liturgy in *company* with the Bible, it was surely incautious in a Dean and a Master of a College, to deliver, before a numerous body of young men, of whom the greater part were designed for holy orders, such sentiments as could not fail to diminish, in their estimation, the value of a book to which they will shortly subscribe, and which is really the bulwark of the established church. It is true, that Dr. Milner had previously declared, that no man could entertain a more exalted idea of our Liturgy than himself; nor do I question the sincerity of his assertion. But when he afterwards declared that he "would not represent the distribution of the Bible *alone*, as a thing that cannot be done with safety, unless accompanied with the *Corrective* of a Prayer Book of the Church of England;" when, mentioning the Liturgy again by name, he represented it as "*a dangerous tenet*," that the Scriptures should be tried by "*the traditions*

of *fallible men*," his hearers could not fail to apply this last expression to the Liturgy itself: they could not fail therefore to conclude that the Liturgy was not so necessary for a *true Protestant* as the Margaret Professor would make them believe. Nor was this the *only* unfavorable impression which must have been made on their minds. The very name of *tradition*, when applied by a Protestant to the Church of Rome, is a term of *reproach*. And is it wise in a dignitary of the Church to apply a term of reproach to the *Liturgy*? Let any man read the whole passage in connexion, and see, whether the expression "traditions of fallible men" can be construed of any thing else.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Milner first denies my position, that it was *necessary* to accompany the Bible with the Liturgy; he continues the subject of the Bible and the Liturgy, by saying (and very rightly) that the latter owes its establishment to the use of the former; and *immediately* concludes with the remark on the Bible, compared with the "*traditions of fallible men*." I should be very sorry to do injustice to the Dean of Carlisle by torturing his words into a meaning which they do not really convey: but I believe that men in general will understand them as I understand them myself. For, when a parallel is drawn between two books *by name*; when that parallel is *repeated*, and *also* by name; and a third time, immediately following the second, the parallel goes on with *one* of those books again by name, but with a *circumlocution* for the other subject of comparison, it is impossible that the circumlocution should apply to any other book than that which had been *already mentioned*. No allusion even had been made to any *other* book. When we consider, therefore, that this speech has, with the approbation of the author, been printed in a public paper, and disseminated, not within its *usual* limits, but throughout the whole kingdom, what a notion will men form of the University of Cambridge, when they read that the Master of a College, whose name stands deservedly so

<sup>1</sup> The paragraph to which I allude, in Dr. Milner's speech, is the following, as printed in the Cambridge Chronicle. "My Lord, our Liturgy itself owes its establishment to the free use of the Bible among the people; and I greatly mistake, if, among the numerous errors of the Church of Rome, there exists a more dangerous tenet, than that the Holy Scriptures themselves must be tried at the bar of the traditions of fallible men." This sentence was delivered by Dr. Milner *immediately* after his censure of my position, that the Liturgy should be distributed in company with the Bible.

high as that of Dr. Milner, not only reprimands a Professor of Divinity, as being unnecessarily anxious for the distribution of the Liturgy, but compares that Liturgy with *Popish tradition*. Language like this, though it may *well* justify the distribution of the Bible *alone*, is better calculated to serve the cause of the Dissenters, than the cause of the Church.

The same effect must be produced, when, to justify the distribution of the Bible *alone*, it is asked by Dr. Clarke, whether the light of revelation “shall be conveyed through the public portals of the temple, or by the gate belonging only to the *priests*.” If our Reformers were now alive, those *priests* who composed the Liturgy and Articles, they would tell him that their office was only *ministerial*; that the knowledge of the book of life was not derived from them, and them *alone*; that they desired not to stop the pilgrim at the *threshold* of the temple; that they were ready to admit him to its *innermost recesses*: but, since between the portal and the altar were dark and intricate passages, where many a pilgrim had lost his way, they requested only permission to present him with a *clue*, which would lead him in safety. If the Liturgy is not wanted, why do Churchmen now object to the religious instruction of Mr. Lancaster? Mr. Lancaster adopts the Bible, and the Bible *alone*. He disdains, with our present advocates, “the gate belonging only to the priests,” and approaches at once to “the portals of the temple.” But having ventured without a clue to explore the innermost recesses, he was bewildered in his way, till at length he wandered to the devious passage, where Christianity itself becomes lost from the view.

#### IV.

But let us descend from allegory, and draw a parallel in common language between the religious instruction afforded by Mr. Lancaster, and the religious instruction afforded by the modern Bible Society. The former confines religious instruction to the *children* of the poor, the latter extends it to *adults*, who are frequently in equal want of it. Both agree in providing a Bible; both agree in leaving that Bible unaccompanied with the *Liturgy*. But the omission of the Liturgy, in the instruction of *children*,

with the consequent want of provision for their going to church, and their being educated as *churchmen*, is at present very generally admitted by the friends of the establishment, to be dangerous to the welfare of church and state.

Now the fundamental principle, which pervades the *whole* of my Sermon at St. Paul's, is the necessity on the part of churchmen, of associating the *Liturgy with the Bible*. In the five first sections, that principle was applied to the instruction of *children*: in the sixth to the instruction of *adults*; and if the principle is *generally* true, it must no less apply to the latter, than to the former. That my sentiments on this subject may be fully understood, I will transcribe that passage in the sixth section, which relates to the importance of adding the Liturgy in the distribution of the Bible. "Where the Church of England is established, it is not Christianity under *any* form, which it is *our* duty to promote. *Our* exertions (though without the smallest restraint on the zeal of other parties) must be *especially* directed to the furtherance of that system, which we are *especially* pledged to support. The Society therefore for promoting Christian Knowledge does not confine itself, where the Church of England is established, to the distribution of the *Bible alone*.\* It adds the *Liturgy*, in which

\* This is the expression, which has been so ingeniously tortured, though I have had the precaution, both here and elsewhere, to explain the meaning of it, by saying that the *Liturgy* should be added, as being the book in which the doctrines of the Bible were *correctly* derived from it. If my objection, therefore, had been *fairly* stated at the Town Hall, it would have been simply this; that I objected (namely on the part of Churchmen) to the distribution of the Bible alone, or *without the Liturgy*. But *this* statement would not have produced the effect intended. The comparison would then have been between Churchmen and Dissenters; and as the Liturgy is the book, which makes the distinction between them, the Dissenters themselves might at least have *thought*, that the Margaret Professor was not very unwise in *contending* for the Liturgy. But by stopping short at the words BIBLE ALONE, Dr. Clarke was enabled to give a new turn to the expression, and to convert the *real* parallel between Churchmen and Dissenters into a *fiction* parallel between Protestants and Papists. "Have we forgot that we are *Englishmen*? Have we forgot that we are *Protestants*?" —No. But you forget, that you are *Churchmen*.

After all, I am unable to discover where the *Popery* lies in recommending the distribution of the Liturgy with the Bible. Catholics give no *Bible at all*; whereas I contend for the *Bible* as much as any man, though I object to our losing sight of the *Liturgy*. Why, says Dr. Milner, of all the errors of Popery, there is none more *dangerous*, than that of trying the Holy Scriptures at the bar of

those doctrines are *derived* from the Bible, which we believe to be *correctly* derived from it. For, though, without the Bible, the Liturgy has no support, yet without the Liturgy men are left in *doubt*, whether the principles of *our* faith should be embraced by them, or not. Without the Liturgy, they want a *guide*, to lead them to the Established Church. Without the Liturgy, the Bible may be *misapplied* to doctrine and discipline most discordant with our own. Where the Church of England therefore is established, the Bible and the Liturgy should be united. For *every* Christian party either finds, or *supposes* that it finds, its peculiar tenets in the Bible. And hence the Act of Uniformity expressly enjoins, that no Sermon shall be preached or Lecture given, except in the University Churches, till after the *Liturgy* has been publicly read."

It is worthy of remark, that though the Sermon, from which this extract was taken, passed through so many editions, and was generally read, I never heard of any objection, that was made to it by the *friends of the establishment*.<sup>1</sup> The National Society was avowedly founded on the *fundamental principle* of that Sermon; and in the Address to the public, which was printed at the head of

the traditions of fallible men. But the trial, which I have uniformly made, is the trial of the Liturgy by the Bible, not the Bible by the Liturgy. But, as I was accused in my absence, and under circumstances, which would have prevented my being heard, had I been present, the whole assembly was impressed with the notion, that the Margaret Professor had so far departed from the principles of a Protestant, as to maintain that the *Bible alone* containeth not all things, which are necessary for *salvation*. It is true, that no one ventured to say so in *positive* terms, especially as I had declared in that very Address, which Dr. Milner then held in his hands, that the Bible was the "*only fountain of religious truth*." But men scruple not to *insinuate* what they dare not *assert*.

<sup>1</sup> Indeed an honor was conferred on this Sermon, which I believe was without precedent: for at the first public Meeting at Bartlett's Buildings after the Sermon was preached, it was resolved (the Archbishop of Canterbury himself being in the Chair) that the publication of it should not be deferred, as usual, till the time of circulating the Society's packet, but that it should be printed *immediately* on account of its great importance. This resolution gave rise to the five octavo editions of it, which preceded the Society's edition, consisting of five thousand copies. But how greatly soever it may be approved by the *friends of the establishment*, I must of course, and indeed for this very reason, expect that it will be assailed by those, who are unwilling that the National Religion should be made the foundation of National Education.

the Resolutions, for the regulation of that Society, the *Liturgy* was mentioned by *name*, as essential in religious instruction. The principle, which, when applied to the instruction of *children*, had been illustrated in my Sermon by the system of Dr. Bell, was illustrated in the same Sermon, when applied to *adults*, by the practice of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. Between the system of Dr. Bell, and the practice of this Society, which is a Society for *Bibles and Prayer Books*, there is the same analogy, as between the system of Mr. Lancaster and the other Society, which is a Society for *Bibles alone*. The application of the principle to this other Society was *implied* however in the Sermon, and not formally *expressed*. But when the Address to the Senate, which contains precisely the *same sentiments* as the sixth section of the Sermon, and several sentences even in the *same words*, exhibited an application of the principle to this Society *by name*, it was *then* discovered, that the general principle, for which I had contended, was equally directed to the Lancasterian System and the Bible Society. It was *then* discovered, that sentiments which were *approved* when supposed only applicable to the former, were matter for reproach when it was found that they applied to the *latter*. And the fundamental principle of the whole Sermon appeared in a *new* light, as soon as the *extent* of it was distinctly perceived. The very men, therefore, who had supported me in its application to the religious instruction of Mr. Lancaster, (among whom I may reckon Dr. Milner himself,)<sup>1</sup> were suddenly converted into zealous *opponents*. Even friendship was sacrificed, and it was determined that the Author of the Address should be crushed. The result is known; the Speeches made on the occasion are before the public; and I have now presented my defence.

But the analogy of this Society to the Lancasterian System, extends only to its operations *at home*, or where the *Church of England* is established. Its operations *abroad* are not only unobjectionable, but *highly laudable*: and, though I think they have been greatly exaggerated, though I think they have been described in terms, which violate both truth and candor,<sup>2</sup> they are certainly

<sup>1</sup> I draw this inference from Dr. Milner's readiness, when I waited on him, to subscribe to the National Society.

<sup>2</sup> See the Appendix.



productive of great and unmixed good. The Liturgy of *our* Church has no concern with the distribution of Bibles, where Christianity is professed under a *different form*. Neither duty nor interest require us, in this case, to do more than distribute the *Bible*. For *this* purpose I would gladly offer the right hand of fellowship, not only to *Protestants* of every description, but to the members of *all other churches*, dispersed throughout the world. For *this* purpose, we should *all*, as Christians, engage on *equal* terms. Being concerned *alike* with the distribution of the *Scriptures*, being alike desirous of promoting the *general* cause of Christianity, we should act on a principle, which *was common to all*. The welfare of the *universal* Church would be promoted, and the welfare of the *Church of England* would be unimpaired. But, when Protestant Churchmen and Protestant Dissenters combine for the distribution of Bibles *at home*, and a Society thus composed *omits the Liturgy*, because the Dissenters could not otherwise partake of it, *such* a Society is formed on terms of inequality, and the *sacrifice* is made on the part of the *church*.

## V.

That its dangers will increase in proportion as the Liturgy is disregarded, is not the surmise of a gloomy imagination, but a *fact*, recorded in the annals of our country. The history of religion in the reign of Charles the First will especially supply us with matter for serious reflection. Some time before the Liturgy was *formally abolished*, we may discover in the writings of the English Divines, not only of the puritanical, but even of the royal party, such traces of indifference in this respect, as will assist us in explaining the subsequent events. The very writer, who is quoted by Mr. Vansittart, though a godson of Archbishop Laud, and a declared enemy of the puritans, had a notion of *generalised* Protestantism, which perfectly accords with the notion at present entertained by the advocates of the modern Bible Society. In a passage immediately preceding the sentence, which Mr. Vansittart has quoted

from the works of Chillingworth,<sup>1</sup> this celebrated writer explains himself in the following words :—"By the *Religion of Protestants* I do not understand the doctrine of Luther, or Calvin, or Melancthon, nor the Confession of Augusta, or Geneva, nor the Catechism of Heidelberg, nor the *Articles of the Church of England*, nor the Harmony of Protestant Confessions." Then comes the sentence, that "the Bible only is the Religion of Protestants." The Protestantism therefore of Chillingworth, was not the Protestantism expressed in our Liturgy and Articles, but Protestantism *in the abstract*, that is, abstracted from all *particular* Confessions of Faith, and among the rest, as he expressly declares, from that, which is adopted by the *Church of England*. Indeed it is well known that Chillingworth had *objections* to our Liturgy and Articles,<sup>2</sup> though he was introduced, in two of the late speeches, as a *companion* for Latimer and Ridley, who were Cranmer's chief assistants in *composing* the Liturgy and Articles.<sup>3</sup> But though Chillingworth, as appears from the preceding extract, rejected from his general notion of Protestantism the *particular* Creeds which he mentions by name, he could not refuse to admit, that *some* Consequences must be deduced from the Bible as Articles of Faith. For he adds, a few lines afterwards, that Protestants receive nothing as matter of faith and religion, "besides *It* (namely the Bible) and the plain *irrefragable and indubitable* Consequences of it." But Protestants of *every* description, however various and even *opposite* in their opinions, claim severally for themselves the honor of deducing from the Bible "irrefragable and indubitable consequences." The doctrine of conditional salvation is an "indubitable consequence" to the Arminian; the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Vansittart has not mentioned in *what part* of his works the sentence is contained, but it may be seen on turning to page 290 of the folio edition of 1704.

<sup>2</sup> See the article Chillingworth in the *Biographia Britannica*, Note (K).

<sup>3</sup> Nor is this the *only* difference between them. Latimer and Ridley, who were born more than a hundred years before Chillingworth, were educated in the Church of Rome, and became Protestants. Chillingworth was educated in the Church of England, and went over to the Church of Rome. And though he became a *Protestant* again, he became, as we see, a *generalised Protestant*.

doctrine of absolute decrees an "indubitable consequence" to the Calvinist. The doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, and the Sacraments, which the Church of England considers as "indubitable consequences" of the Bible would *not* be so, if the Unitarians and the Quakers were right in the consequences which *they* deduce from the Bible. But the consequences, which *they* deduce appear "indubitable" to *them*: and since they appeal as well as ourselves to the *Bible alone*, we cannot, according to Chillingworth's own definition, refuse them the title of *Protestants*. Now the notion of *generalised* Protestantism, which admits of no reference to any *particular* Creed, was well adapted to prepare the minds of men in the reign of Charles the First, for the subsequent abolition of the English Liturgy.<sup>1</sup> And if this system of generalised Protestantism, which is likewise maintained by Mr. Lancaster, continues to be maintained in the practice of the modern Bible Society, and in the vindications of its advocates, we may apprehend the same effect from the operation of the same cause. Men become so enamored of the Protestant in the *abstract*, that they abstract themselves from the Protestantism *by law established*.

If we proceed in our inquiries, and examine the several steps, which intervened between the introduction of this notion of generalised Protestantism, and the abolition of the Liturgy altogether, we shall find additional matter for serious reflection at the present period. The party comprehended under the name of Puritans, which was daily increasing in numbers and power, were secretly attached, as well to the *discipline*, as to the *doctrine*, of Calvin, though they continued to affect a regard for the Liturgy, till their plans were ripe for execution. But, as soon as Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, were committed to the Tower, the Long Parliament began to concert measures for its total abolition. The first step was taken by the upper

<sup>1</sup> The celebrated work of Chillingworth, entitled, "The religion of Protestants a safe way to Salvation," which he wrote after his return from Popery, was first published in 1637. It was highly esteemed, as a controversial work *against the Catholics*, and was universally read as soon as published. But it served the cause of the Puritans as much as the cause of the *Church*; inasmuch as the Protestantism, which it defends, is *generalised* Protestantism, according to the system of Mr. Lancaster, and the modern Bible Society.

House in March 1640-1, when a *Committee for religion* was appointed, consisting of *ten* spiritual, but of *twenty* temporal Lords, with power to call to their assistance such Divines as they approved. Having debated on the subject of the *five Points*, and condemned the *Arminian* exposition, the Committee proceeded to a reformation of the *Liturgy*: but after various debates, which continued nearly two months, the Committee broke up without coming to a decision.<sup>1</sup> A measure, adopted about the same time by the House of Commons, was more effectual, because it went on so broad a basis, that the object in contemplation was not immediately perceived. The puritanical party in that house, under the pretence of removing the anxiety of the episcopal party, who saw dangers to the church arising from every quarter, proposed the following oath, which was called the Protestation. "I. A. B. do in the presence of Almighty God, promise, vow, and protest, to maintain and defend, as far as lawfully I may, with my life, power, and estate, the true reformed Protestant religion, expressed in the doctrine of the Church of England, against all Popery, and Popish innovation within this realm, contrary to the said doctrine; and according to the duty of mine allegiance, I will maintain, and defend his Majesty's royal person, honor, and estate."<sup>2</sup> The episcopal party, not aware of the *generalising* system of the Puritans, and supposing that the words "Protestant Religion expressed in the doctrine of the Church of England," meant the Protestant Religion expressed in the *Liturgy*, that is, according to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, *as by law established*, very readily concurred in this oath of Protestation. But they soon discovered, that the *secret* object of the Protestation, was to *abolish*, instead of *supporting* the Liturgy, which the Puritans now called the Service Book. For on the 13th day of the same month, when petitions were presented to the House of Commons by the two Universities in favor of the Church Establishment, and

<sup>1</sup> Collier's Ecclesiastical History, Vol. ii. p. 799.

<sup>2</sup> The whole of the *Protestation*, which contains also other matter, may be seen in Rushworth's Historical Collections, P. iii. p. 241. It was proposed and taken on May 3, 1641.

the episcopal party appealed to the late Protestation in support of those petitions, the majority of the House, which consisted of Puritans, came immediately to the resolution, that the words in question, "are not to be extended to the maintaining of *any form of worship*, discipline, or government, nor of rites and ceremonies."<sup>1</sup>

Within a few months after this resolution a bill passed both Houses to exclude Bishops from a seat in Parliament:<sup>2</sup> and the King was at length compelled to give his assent. The Liturgy, having fallen into *discredit*, began now to be laid aside, though the use of it was continued by the Episcopalians as the only means of prolonging the existence of the still established church. Nor were the Puritans themselves less aware of its importance. They determined therefore to take the earliest opportunity of preventing the use of it altogether. When the civil war had broken out, and the power of the Convocation was at an end, the Parliament resolved to appoint in its stead an *Assembly of Divines* composed of members better suited to its purpose.<sup>3</sup> This new Assembly of *Divines* was not composed entirely of *spiritual* persons, for some of the most zealous members, both of the upper and lower house, are placed at the head of the list; and scattered among the names of its inferior members are those of three Prelates, the Primate of Ireland, with the Bishops of Exeter and Bristol. The Assembly soon adopted a set of Resolutions (presented to parliament in the form of a petition) of which the eighth was, that "*the whole body and practice of Popery*, may be totally abolished."<sup>4</sup> Now by the expression "body and practice of Popery," they could only mean the doctrine and discipline of the *Church of England*, which was still established by law, and was alone therefore "the body and

<sup>1</sup> The whole Resolution is given in Rushworth's Historical Collections, Part iii. p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> This Bill is given at length in Scobel's Collection of Acts, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> The ordinance for this Assembly is given in Scobel's Collection, p. 42—44. It is dated June 12, 1643. The names of the persons appointed are all enumerated in this ordinance.

<sup>4</sup> Rushworth's Collection, Part III. Vol. ii. p. 345.

practice" which could be *abolished*. Indeed the terms *Liturgy* and *Poperly* were among the Puritans *synonymous*: and at the very time they were destroying the Church of *England*, they invariably pretended, that their measures were directed against the Church of *Rome*.

At length on the 26th of August, 1645, the Lords and Commons assembled in parliament, repealed, at the suggestion of this Assembly, the Acts which had been passed in the reigns of Edward and Elizabeth, in *support* of the Liturgy, and enacted, that it be no longer used in any place of public worship.<sup>1</sup> The reasons alleged by the Assembly of Divines, are given in the Preface to the Directory, which they substituted for the Book of Common Prayer.<sup>2</sup> They allege that "the Liturgy used in the Church of England, notwithstanding all the pains and religious intentions of the compilers of it, hath proved an offence not only to many of *the Godly at home, but also to the reformed churches abroad* :—that the *Prelates and their faction* have labored to raise the estimation of it to such a height, &c.—that the *Papists* made their advantage this way, boasted that the Common Prayer came up to a compliance with a great part of their service, &c." Thereupon they declare that they have agreed to set aside the Common Prayer, "not from any love to novelty, or intention to disparage our *first Reformers*,—but that we may in some measure answer the gracious providence of God, which at this time calleth upon us for *further Reformation*." But the Liturgy, though the use of it was prohibited in public, continued to be used in private houses by the friends of the established church, whose numbers were still considerable.<sup>3</sup> The Puritans therefore, who now governed in

<sup>1</sup> See Scobel's Collection, p. 75, 76.

<sup>2</sup> The Directory, so called from its containing *directions* in regard to the forms of public worship, is printed in Scobel's Collection, p. 77-92.

<sup>3</sup> Before the Liturgy was abolished, petitions had been presented to Parliament from various counties in favor of the established church: and though the means of procuring signatures to petitions at *that* time are not to be compared with the present means of procuring them, the petitions in favor of the established church were signed by nearly *fifty thousand*. See Collier's Ecclesiastical History, Vol. ii. p. 822.

Parliament, well knowing that the use of the Liturgy, even *in private*, would keep alive that regard for the Church, which the wished to extirpate, obtained an Ordinance in the following month of August, by which the use of the Liturgy was prohibited "*in any private place or family*," under the penalty of five pounds for the first offence, ten for the second, and a year's imprisonment for the third.<sup>1</sup>

No sooner was the Liturgy thus finally abolished, than a dispute arose between the Presbyterians and the Independents, the latter of whom *dissented* from the *newly established* church, and were called, therefore, in their controversies with the former, the Dissenting Brethren.<sup>2</sup> The *Liturgy*, which is a system both of doctrine and discipline, having been exchanged for the *Directory*, which relates more to the latter, the Independents, who would suffer no control, either in the one, or in the other, applied the same terms to the Directory, which the Presbyterians had applied to the Liturgy. The *new churchmen* in vain attempted to resist the *new dissenters*, by refusing that toleration, which men of every religion may justly claim. "Beware, lest out of cowardice ye *tolerate* what God would *not* have tolerated," said one of their preachers in his Sermon before the Commons. "Take heed of *Toleration*," said another in his Sermon before the Lord. "For God's sake, my Lords, let us not leave a *Reformation*, which may need a *Toleration*."<sup>3</sup> But the *intolerance* of the Presbyterians found a counterpoise in the *power of the army*, which was thrown into the scale of the Independents. In this manner was *discipline* set afloat, as doctrine had been before: and public worship in the churches of this kingdom was regulated by the discretion or caprice of the officiating minister. Hence the number of religious sects, which arose about that period, exceeded all that are recorded

<sup>1</sup> See Scobel's Collection, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> In 1643, a book was published in London, called, "Papers and Answers of the Dissenting Brethren, and the Committee of the Assembly of Divines."

<sup>3</sup> These Sermons were preached, the one on March 25th, the other on April 29, 1646. More extracts of the same kind may be seen in c. v. of the work called, "A Century of Presbyterian Preachers."

in the catalogues of Irenæus, Epiphanius, and Augustine. One of the celebrated preachers of *that time*, said in a Sermon before the Parliament, “There is such a numerous increase of *errors and heresies*, that I blush to repeat what some have affirmed, namely, that there are no less than *a hundred and four score several heresies*, propagated and spread in the neighbouring city, and many of such a nature, that I may truly say in Calvin’s language, the errors and innovations, under which they groaned of *late years*, were but tolerable trifles, children’s play, compared with these damnable doctrines of devils.”<sup>1</sup> Bishop Beveridge in his Sermon on the Excellency and Usefulness of the Common Prayer, (a Sermon which should be read by every member of the Bible Society) says likewise in reference to that age, and to the abolition of the Liturgy, “People being deprived of that, whereby they should have been edified, were immediately tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, until at length many of them fell into the most pernicious and damnable heresies, that were ever heard of in the Church. Yea *together with the Liturgy* they laid aside all distinction between sacred and common things, by which means the whole nation was in danger of being spread with profaneness and irreligion.”<sup>2</sup>—Yet the very men, who are described in these extracts, had the Bible in *constant use*: the sectaries of that age were ready with a text of scripture for *every occurrence*, whether

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Case’s Thanksgiving Sermon for the taking of Chester.—Also in the year 1646, (which was several years after the Liturgy *began* to be neglected, and one year after the *total* abolition of it) Mr. Edwards, a Calvinistic Clergyman, published a book containing many curious facts, under the title of “Gangrena, or a catalogue and discovery of many of the errors, heresies, blasphemies, and pernicious practices of the Sectaries of this time, vented and acted in England these four last years.” I would particularly recommend a perusal of this book to those gentlemen who now contend for the distribution of the *Bible alone*. Even the *Imprimatur* of this Book is a curious document; it runs thus, “Reader, that thou mayest discern the mischief of Ecclesiastical Anarchy, the monstrousness of the much affected *Toleration*, and be warned to be wise to sobriety, and fear and suspect the pretended *New Lights*, I approve that this Treatise discovering the Gangrene of so many *strange Opinions*, should be imprinted.”

<sup>2</sup> I take this opportunity of reminding the advocates of the Bible Society, that by their *own* acknowledgment, the Bible is capable of perversion, or they would not be perpetually boasting, that they give it without note or comment.



trivial or important. With the Bible in their mouths, they overturned both the altar and the throne. But they had the *Bible alone*, or unaccompanied with the *Liturgy*: they *expounded*, every man from his own *caprice*: and the sectaries became as *numerous*, as the interpretations of the Bible were *various*.

The tender page with horny fists was gall'd,  
 And he was *gifted* most, that londest bawl'd.  
 The *Spirit* gave the doctoral degree,  
 And every member of a company  
 Was of his *Trade* and of his *Bible* free. }  
*Plain* truths enough for *needful* use they found,  
 But men would still be itching to *expound*.  
 Each was ambitious of the obscurest place,  
 No measure ta'en from *knowledge*, all from *grace*.  
 Study and pains were now no more their care,  
*Texts* were explained by *fasting* and by *prayer*.  
 This was the fruit the *private* spirit brought,  
 Occasioned by *great zeal*, and *little thought*.  
 While crowds *unlearned*, with rude devotion warm,  
 About the sacred viands, buz and swarm.  
 The *fly-blown text* creates a crawling brood,  
 And turns to maggots what was meant for food.  
 A thousand daily *sects* rise up and die,  
 A thousand more the perished race supply.  
 So all the use we make of Heaven's discover'd will,  
 Is not to have it, or to use it ill.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dryden's *Religio Laici*. V. 405-424.—By way of contrast, not only with Bishop Beveridge, but even with the Calvinistic Divines above quoted, I will add a passage from Dr. Milner's Speech, which he introduced almost immediately after his censure of my position, that the *Liturgy* should accompany the Bible. "It is my firm belief, that if Dissenters of all denominations, by no means excluding Roman Catholics, or the members of our own communion, did but read and study their Bibles more constantly, and with more devout care and application, and with more of a direct view to improve the heart and correct the practice, *Christians of every denomination, without exception*, would approach much nearer to one another than they now do, *would actually coincide, or nearly so, in most essentials, &c.*" Surely, Dr. Milner, with his knowledge of ecclesiastical history, a knowledge, which he himself proclaimed in his own speech, could not be ignorant, that even in the *essentials* of Christianity, very *different* conclusions have been drawn from the Bible, and by men, of whom it would be very unjust to say that they had not studied it *devoutly*. There is, however, *one* method of producing *uniformity* of sentiment among those, to whom Bibles are distributed, even if they receive not the Prayer Book, and that is, by the addition of *Tracts*.

## VI.

I have thus shown, as well from history as from argument, that the Liturgy is essential to the welfare of the established church; and that in proportion, as the former is disregarded, in the same proportion the latter must be endangered. I have been the more diffuse on this subject, because among all the writers, who have engaged in the controversy about the modern Bible Society, I do not perceive that any one, except myself, has pointed out the danger arising to the established church, from the practice of neglecting to give the *Prayer Book* with the Bible.<sup>1</sup> I have

If for instance, they, who withhold the Liturgy, accompany the Bible with Calvinistic Tracts, the Bible in such company, will be *uniform* in the production of Calvinism.

<sup>1</sup> The passage in my Sermon at St. Paul's, relative to this subject, has been already quoted in the fourth section of this pamphlet, and the address to the Senate contains precisely the same sentiments. Having stated the time of foundation and other circumstances relative as well to the *ancient* as to the *modern* Bible Society, I proceeded as follows:

"The two Societies agree in the very laudable object of distributing Bibles both at home and abroad, though the number of Bibles distributed by the latter, especially abroad, greatly exceeds the number distributed by the former. For not only are the funds of the latter much superior to those of the former, but those funds are employed in the distribution of Bibles *only*, whereas the funds of the former are employed partly on Bibles, partly on Prayer-Books, and partly on Religious Tracts, which are in unison with the doctrine and discipline of the Established Church.

"From this short statement, it appears that the former, or the *ancient* Society, is not only a *Bible Society*, but likewise (what the other is *not*) a *Church-of-England Society*. With the former it is an invariable rule, in promoting Christian Knowledge, to keep in view the Doctrines, which the members of the Society believe and maintain. Especially where the Church of England is established, they consider it as *their* duty to promote Christianity, not under *any* form, but under that particular form, which, above every other, they are *pledged* to support, which alone is the *tenure* of ecclesiastical and even of civil preferment. In conformity with that rule, the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge (the *ancient* Bible Society) distributes, in its home circulation, as well the *Liturgy* as the Bible: for though in the spirit of true Protestantism it acknowledges the Bible as the *only fountain* of religious truth, yet it knows, from the experience of all ages, that the waters of that fountain will be clear or turbid, according to the channel into which they are drawn. And as the members of the Society *believe* (though without reproach to those whose belief is different) that the doctrines of the Liturgy are *correctly* derived from the Bible, they consider it as

read again what was written by the two principal combatants, Dr. Wordsworth and Mr. Dealtry, and I do not find any *allusion* to this danger, though the more I consider it, the more I am convinced of its magnitude. It is true, that the question was agitated whether *religious tracts* should accompany the Bible. But *this* is a question, of very inferior moment to the question, whether the *Liturgy* shall accompany the Bible. The Liturgy is the *criterion* of the churchman. The Liturgy, by the law of the land, is the *test* by which churchmanship is tried. Whoever rejects the *Liturgy*, ceases to be a *Churchman*. But in respect to tracts, every man may exercise his own judgment, not only in respect to the *choice* of them, but in respect to the question, whether he shall omit them altogether. The *primary* duty of a Churchman is to provide the poor with *Bibles and Prayer Books*: the providing them with *Tracts* is only a secondary consideration. No harm can be done by giving the *Prayer Book* with the Bible: *much* harm may be done by giving *Tracts* with the Bible. On the other hand,

their indispensable duty, to unite the one with the other. Indeed uniformity of doctrine can never be produced without an adherence to this rule: for *every* Christian party either finds, or *supposes* that it finds, its peculiar doctrines in the Bible. But this salutary rule, so necessary to promote uniformity, so desirable therefore by every true Churchman, *cannot* be observed by the *modern Bible Society*: for such a rule would not only be contrary to its present avowed object, but absolutely inadmissible from the very *Constitution* of the Society."

I am aware, indeed, that the Christian Observer (under the head of Religious Intelligence for December 1811) has informed his readers that a Noble Earl, to whom I sent the Address, has confuted it in the following single sentence. "After all you have said, I am wholly unable to see, how the most extensive circulation of the Bible can possibly injure the Church of England." I admit that the Noble Earl did write to me a Letter containing this sentence. But it *cannot* be a *confutation* of my Address, for this plain reason, that it is no *contradiction* of it. The very Address, of which it is here called a confutation, *recommends* the circulation of the Bible: for it describes that circulation as a "very *laudable* object." The very Address, therefore, which is thus represented by the Christian Observer, and indeed by other advocates of the modern Society, as *inimical* to the circulation of the Scriptures, is itself a proof of its being *friendly* to that circulation. I am equally with the Noble Earl, and the whole army of my opponents, who are accustomed to say the very same thing, unable to comprehend how "the most extensive circulation of the Bible can possibly injure the Church of England." The point, on which I am at issue with them is, whether the Church of England may not possibly be injured by an EXTENSIVE OMISSION OF THE LITURGY.

much *good* may be done by the addition of Tracts, if they are *properly* chosen : and I believe there is no collection of tracts, which upon the whole is more entitled to the approbation of the true Churchman, than the twelve volumes published by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

But let us return to the Liturgy, and take a review of the several very interesting facts recorded in the preceding section, which deserve the more attention, as they have a striking similarity to the events *now* passing before us. We have seen, that in the first place was introduced a system of *generalised* Protestantism, of Protestantism *in the abstract*, or of Protestantism *abstracted* from all

<sup>1</sup> This Collection is arranged under the following heads ; Tracts on the Holy Scriptures, on public and private Devotion, on the Catechism, on Confirmation, on Baptism, on the Holy Communion, on Christian doctrine and practice, on particular duties, against common vices, on the education and instruction of children and families, against Popery, against Enthusiasm.—Tracts against *Enthusiasm* are particularly useful in the present age, whatever opinion may be formed of this, or that particular Tract. By Enthusiasm is not meant a well-tempered religious zeal, without which no Clergyman can be extensively useful. In religion we should have *zeal*, and also *moderation* : we must only endeavour (said Sir Richard Steele) to keep fire out of the one and frost out of the other. The advocates of the Bible Society, who certainly avoid the extreme of *frost*, prefer the Tracts against Popery, which are very excellent, and very useful, though not the *only* Tracts, of which we stand in need. But there is a *peculiar advantage* in quoting the Tracts against Popery, an advantage indeed of a *two-fold* nature. For since the Church of Rome admits Tradition to be *one* source of authority, and the Bible *another* source, every true Protestant, when arguing with a *Catholic*, must contend for the *Bible alone*. And as the very *nature* of the controversy between Catholics and Protestants excludes all consideration of the *Liturgy*, the Tracts against Popery by our most distinguished Divines, will supply passages in abundance ; where mention is made of the *Bible alone*, and *no* mention is made of the *Liturgy*. Hence the practice of the modern Bible Society is *apparently* justified by such distinguished names as Tillotson, and Secker. But would Tillotson and Secker in a controversy with *Dissenters*, have approved the *distribution* of the Bible alone? Would *they*, would especially the latter, who wrote Lectures on the *Church Catechism*, have justified the neglect of giving the Prayer Book with the Bible? We have already seen what Bishop Beveridge, who was a *contemporary* of Tillotson, thought on this subject. And Tillotson himself, though bred among the Puritans, must from his *own* knowledge of the mischiefs which arose from the neglect of the Liturgy, have been induced to abstain from *recommending* that neglect. He well knew, that the grand distinction between Protestant *Churchmen* and Protestant *Dissenters* lies in the adoption or rejection of the Liturgy. He knew also, that the overthrow of the Church, of which he was a witness, proceeded not from *Popish*, but *Protestant*, Dissenters.

peculiar creeds. This soon became the favorite system of the Independents. And we know that it is a favorite system with the present advocates of the Bible Society; for they soar into the regions of high Protestantism, till the *Church of England* entirely disappears. Of the generalising system we have seen another instance in the famous *Protestation*, which the Puritans proposed to the Episcopalians: for while the latter *supposed* that the members of the House of Commons were protesting in *favor* of the Liturgy, the former, though using the *same words*, were protesting *against* it. An error, which bears some resemblance to it, is very prevalent in the modern Society, where we find protestations so very comprehensive, as *not* to comprehend the Liturgy. When the *Assembly of Divines* was instituted for the express purpose of advancing the cause of religion, it was honored with the names of *three Bishops*, and two *Heads of Houses* in Cambridge.<sup>1</sup> These things are worthy of notice, because it has been said, that the modern Society can never be injurious to the Church, because several Bishops and Heads of Houses have joined it. Further, the *Assembly of Divines*, when they had formed the resolution of abolishing the *Liturgy*, presented a petition to Parliament, to abolish “the body and practice of *Popery*.” At present also, a Professor of Divinity is accused of *Popery*, because he pleads for the *Liturgy*. The *Assembly of Divines*, even when they *set aside* the Liturgy, declared they had no intention to *disparage our first Reformers*, of whom they speak in terms of the greatest respect. In like manner, the advocates of the *modern Society* profess *enthusiastic* regard for our Reformers, though they think it unnecessary to distribute the work, which those Reformers *composed*. The Assembly of Divines declared that “the Providence of God called on them for *further Reformation*.” Whether the *modern Society* will lead to *further reformation*, is now the subject of inquiry. But there was another feature in the Assembly of Divines, which we may distinctly perceive in the modern Society. It consisted chiefly of

<sup>1</sup> I must not, however, neglect to mention, that the *Margaret Professor* was a member of this Assembly.—The names of the members are all given in the Ordinance for its appointment, printed in Scobel’s Collection, p. 42. It is remarkable, that no Heads of Houses, and no Professors at *Oxford*, were enrolled in this *Assembly of Divines*.

Calvinists : and the Calvinistic Clergy of the Church of England are generally members of the modern Society. Now a man, who adopts the doctrines of Calvin, cannot be *zealously* attached to our English Liturgy. A Calvinist may in *many respects* have a great regard for it : but he cannot have *much pain* in parting with it, as it abounds with passages so decisive of *conditional* salvation, that no ingenuity can torture them into the language of *absolute* decrees.<sup>1</sup> Indeed we know that the English Liturgy was so offensive to the Calvinists of Scotland, that the very attempt to introduce it in that country produced an insurrection, which ended with the solemn League and Covenant, to which the English Calvinists acceded. And this very *Assembly of Divines* declared, in the Preface to the Directory, that “the Liturgy used in the Church of England, notwithstanding all the pains and religious intentions of the compilers of it, hath proved *an offence*, not only to many of the *Godly* at home, but also to the *reformed churches abroad*.” Now the foreign churches, which go by the name of “*reformed churches*,” are *Calvinistic*, the others being called *Lutheran* : and the persons, to whom the term “*Godly*” is applied, whether in ancient or in modern times, are easily understood.

Lastly, let us remember, that the language holden by the Calvinists in the reign of Charles the First exactly corresponds with the language *now* holden by many of the advocates of the modern Society. For a more intolerant and more persecuting spirit was never witnessed, than is frequently displayed in their writings and speeches, as sufficiently appears from the examples only, which are quoted in this Inquiry. The only difference is in favor of the *ancient* orators, who had the candor to declare their meaning, and to exclaim without reserve “*Take heed of Toleration*.”

Should it here be asked, whether, arguing from analogy, and the experience of past ages, I am apprehensive, that the *same* measure

<sup>1</sup> When our Liturgy teaches us to pray, that the rest of our life may be pure and holy *so* that we may come to eternal joy ;—that the ministers of Christ may *so* prepare the way, that we may be found *acceptable* in his sight ;—that we may *so* pass through things temporal as *finally* to lose not the things eternal ;—that we may *so* faithfully serve him in this life, that we *fail not finally* to attain his heavenly promises ; such and similar expressions it is *impossible* to reconcile with Calvin's doctrine of salvation, which entirely excludes conditionality.

which was finally adopted by the Assembly of Divines, will be adopted in the present age, and that a *direct* attempt will be made to abolish the Liturgy by a formal appeal to the Legislature, I would answer that I do *not* suspect it. But I am not without apprehensions, that something *similar* will be attempted. We know that the *Liturgy*, by the laws of this country, is the *Test* of the Churchman; and, that a repeal of the *Test Act* is a thing, which has been already attempted, and is certainly not abandoned. Since therefore the *indirect* mode is the most practicable, we have the most reason to apprehend it. And here let me ask every cool and impartial observer, whether any thing can be better calculated to prepare the way for a repeal of the *Test Act*, than the rapid progress of the modern Bible Society. In proportion as the Liturgy is disregarded, in the same proportion must the *Test*, which in other words is the *Liturgy itself*, appear unimportant. Indeed, if the Liturgy is of so little consequence, as is now represented, the *Church Establishment* cannot be worth retaining, for it is the *Liturgy*, with its rubrics, which constitutes the service of the Church. That the *Dissenters* should unite under the banners of this modern Society is not a matter of surprise. And, if they unite under its banners for the very purpose of obtaining a repeal of the *Test Act*, no one has a right to blame them. It is their *interest* to do so, and, if Churchmen encourage them, the Dissenters themselves are free from reproach. But beside the Dissenters, it is well known that a considerable body of *Churchmen* are friends to a repeal of the *Test Act*. And, if they consider the progress of this Bible Society, as affording the means of obtaining their favorite object, they have a two-fold advantage in view, one of which is the removal of a restriction, which they consider (whether truly or not) as impolitic and unjust.

That there are Churchmen and Statesmen, who are not only desirous that the *Test Act* should be repealed, but consider the present progress of the British and Foreign Bible Society, as the most *effectual means* of obtaining that repeal, can hardly admit a doubt. The speech of Mr. Whitbread, at the late meeting at Bedford for the formation of an Auxiliary Society, is so decisive on this subject, that further evidence is superfluous. After dwelling with pleasure on the advantages of having the *Bible alone*, he said, "he

firmly hoped and believed that in a time *much shorter than could have been anticipated*, Christians will maintain their Christian character and profession, without regarding the *points of difference* which subsisted among them. The barrier *from this time* might be considered as *broken down*; and it should be his endeavour, to demolish and prevent the *vestige* of it from being left.”<sup>1</sup> Now the barrier between Churchmen and Dissenters, the barrier interposed by the *law of the land*, is the Test Act. What therefore can we conclude, when it is said, that not a *vestige of this barrier* shall remain, than, that a repeal of the Test Act is in contemplation? And the progress *already* made toward the effecting of this purpose, by the rapid advance of the Bible Society, (to which we have had nothing similar, since Peter the Hermit went preaching the Crusade) was viewed, in such a light, that this barrier *even then* was represented as “*broken down*.” And, if it was broken down by the Auxiliary Society at *Bedford*, what *further* havoc must have been made on this barrier by the Auxiliary Societies, now established at Colchester, at Ipswich, at Huntingdon, and in the *University of Cambridge*!

I know indeed, that there are *other* Statesmen not inferior in talent to Mr. Whitbread, who espouse this Society with equal zeal; and yet, when the repeal of the Test Act is proposed (as Mr. Whitbread intimates, and which the Dissenters are really *encouraged* to attempt) will think it their duty to *oppose* that repeal. And, as no man would *designedly* encourage what must tend to *facilitate* a measure, which he *disapproves*, we must conclude that every Statesman, who is desirous of *retaining* the Test Act, and yet promotes the progress of this Society, promotes it without apprehending the injurious effects, to which, if the arguments already used have any validity, it must ultimately lead. I sincerely lament that I have the misfortune to differ upon this subject with men of such distinguished abilities, and such acknowledged integrity, that this difference alone is sufficient to excite a distrust of my own opinion. But I have considered the subject in all its bearings, and perhaps with more at-

<sup>1</sup> I have copied this passage from Mr. Whitbread's Speech, as printed in the Cambridge Chronicle of December 27, 1811; and, as it was inserted by order of the Bedford Committee, the Speech so printed may be considered as an official document.



tention, than can possibly be bestowed on it by men in high situations. It is of all subjects, on which I ever undertook to write, the most intricate and perplexed. And, though at various times I have instituted inquiries, which demanded close reasoning and profound thought, I never entered on a subject, which required *so much* penetration, as the present. It is a subject of so extraordinary a nature, that, while orators, whose wisdom never goes beyond the surface, feel competent to decide, there are points in it, which may elude the discernment of the most sagacious and profound. Nor is it difficult to assign the reason.

There is nothing, which so prevents men from seeing the *danger* of an object, as, when in the *pursuit* of that object they are animated by *religious zeal*. With the prospect of extending the *universal* church, men find it difficult to contract their views within the limits of a *single* church. With the prospect of promulgating the gospel to *distant regions*, where its light had never shone, they view, through a glass inverted, the *danger at home*. And to the danger, thus diminished, they are ready to close their eyes, if the *removal* of that danger obscures the glory of the prospect. But if I have succeeded in presenting that danger in its *true light*, and its *natural magnitude*, we have then sufficient guarantee that it will be averted as zealously, as it has been inadvertently promoted.

If I have *succeeded* in presenting that danger in its true light and its natural magnitude, we may *then* also be assured that every *other* Churchman, who is swayed by *religious* motives, will be ready to *apply* the remedy, which shall appear most conducive to its removal. Their regard for the *general* good will outweigh the private feelings, which accompany the acknowledgment of a mistake. They will recollect that the wisest and best of men are liable to error; that they are *especially* liable in the great and important concerns of religion; and that there is *no* subject, in which, from its extreme intricacy, men are *so* liable to error, as in the present. We have further assurance in the repeated declarations of distinguished Churchmen, who have often declared, that they never would encourage the Society, if they perceived any danger, and who are pledged therefore to seek a remedy, when they *do* perceive it. And those respectable Bishops, who have honored the Society with their patronage and support, to whom no man of common sense would ascribe dis-

honorable motives, since the higher our rank the more deeply are we involved in considerations—as well of interest, as of duty, those respectable Bishops, who, as constituted guardians of the church, are more than *other* men responsible for every act, which may *endanger* it, will, I am confident, examine, with care and impartiality, the arguments which are used in this Inquiry, and, if finally they are of opinion, that danger *exists*, will suffer neither time to be lost, nor labor to be spared, in the application of a remedy. Nor is the responsibility *much* less with those, who preside in the two Universities: for if the Society is attended with *evil*, it receives a ten-fold augmentation, by being fixed in a seat of education. If an evil is great when only *local*, what must it be, when established in a place, where the youth of this kingdom will be *taught to embrace it*, and to *disseminate* that evil throughout the British dominions?

## VII.

Having explained what I apprehend to be the *chief danger* of the modern Bible Society, I ought not to close the Inquiry, without considering what *remedies* may be applied. But before we consider what *may* be applied, let us consider what *may not* be applied, because the question will be thus reduced to a narrower compass, and more easily brought to a point.

If the Church is in danger from this Society, the most effectual remedy, in the opinion of its *advocates*, is, that Churchmen in general should become members of it, and thus obtain a preponderance over the Dissenting Interest. On this account Mr. Vansittart, in his Letter above quoted, hopes that the time is not far distant, when the Society will be patronized by the whole episcopal bench. “This” (says Mr. Vansittart,) “would appear to me the most effectual remedy for any supposed danger from the *dissenting influence* in the Bible Society?”—But is it not owing to the *dissenting influence*, that, when the Society distributes Bibles *at home*, those Bibles are not accompanied with *Prayer Books*? Are not Prayer Books *omitted* for this very reason, that it is a *joint concern* between Churchmen and Dissenters? A religious Society, consisting of *Churchmen*, has nothing to prevent it from distributing both Bibles and Prayer Books. But as soon as the *dissenting influence* is mixed with the

*Church influence*, the distribution of the Prayer Book by a Society so composed is at once *prevented*. Even therefore, if all the Bishops and all the Clergy in England and Wales became members of the Society, it would still remain a Society for *Bibles alone*. No preponderance whatever, on the part of the Church, could alter the *constitution* of the Society. The evil consequences, therefore, of neglecting to give the Prayer Book with the Bible, instead of being *diminished* by an accession of Churchmen, are really *increased* by it. For every addition of Churchmen is an addition of *contributors* to the evil.

If it be said that Churchmen, who become members of this Society, are not restricted in their *individual* capacity to the distribution of the *Bible alone*, I answer that the very circumstance of their joining this Society, though it does not actually *prevent* their procuring Prayer Books elsewhere, has a *natural and necessary tendency* to diminish, in the opinion of Churchmen themselves, both the *importance* of the Liturgy, and the consequent frequency of its *distribution*. As this *tendency* of the Society is very important in its effects, and yet in general is not perceived, it will be worth our while to analyse, and examine it in its several relations. I would not insist on the *additional difficulty*, to which men are exposed, when the Bibles and Prayer Books, which they distribute to the poor, must be sought in *two* Repositories instead of *one*, because this additional difficulty *might* be overcome by a proportional increase of zeal for the Book of Common Prayer. But the misfortune is, that as the difficulty *increases*, the inclination to remove it *diminishes*. When men are accustomed to procure Bibles from a Society, which furnishes at the same time the Prayer Book, they acquire the *habit* of associating the one with the other. But a habit of a contrary description is acquired by belonging to a Society, which furnishes the *Bible alone*. This habit occasions a *forgetfulness* of the Liturgy, with a consequent *indifference* to it. And this indifference is increased by a co-operation with those, who not only *omit* the Liturgy, but *reject it altogether*. Nor is mere *indifference* to the Liturgy the sole effect of this Society. Men are always inclined to *justify* the conduct of the Society, of which they are members; for in so doing they justify *themselves*. Hence it is, that the *fundamental law* of this Society, the distributing the *Bible alone*, becomes, even among *Churchmen*, in the first place a matter of *excuse*, and gradually a

matter of *approbation*, till at length the apology must be made by those, who *contend* for its union with the Liturgy. Such is the consequence of this boasted union between Churchmen and Dissenters. When men of *different* religious principles are accustomed to act in *concert*, and to act on the principle of *one* party, that principle not only becomes the leading principle of the *whole body*, but gradually *approves* itself to the whole body. When Churchmen, who *have* a Liturgy, and Dissenters who have *none*, agree in forming a Society, which by its constitution *excludes* the distribution of the Liturgy, the *whole* Society conforms to the principle of the Dissenters. For, though there is a principle, which is common to them all as *Christians*, namely, the distribution of the *Bible*, yet the principle, which is peculiar to the *Churchman*, is wholly *disregarded*. Hence arises that notion of *generalised* Protestantism, which has been lately the theme of admiration: and because the *Bible only* is the religion of the *Protestant*, they disregard all *distinctions*, which separate *one* class of Protestants from *another*. In this manner do Churchmen become advocates of a principle, which, *if they had never belonged to this Bible Society*, they would probably have *condemned*.

In the preceding paragraph I have estimated the *tendency* of this Bible Society to produce an indifference to the *Liturgy*, among Churchmen in *general*: and I have shown that the bare *connexion* with it is sufficient to produce the effect, even when unassisted by the operation of *other* causes. I have taken nothing for granted, in respect to any *peculiar* doctrines, which those Churchmen may espouse, who are the most zealous *advocates* of this Society. The arguments, which I have here used, have derived no part of their energy, from the consideration of that bias, which the principles of *Calvinism* may give to those Churchmen, who are members of the Society. I have not argued from the practice (whether real or imaginary) of Churchmen supplying the place of the Liturgy with Calvinistic Tracts: though, if it be *true*, that, such Tracts (or even *verbal* Expositions) are communicated with the Bible, the omission of the Liturgy may be more easily explained. I have left *this* consideration to those, whose connexions may afford them the means of more accurate information. I have here appealed to *no fact whatever*: I have deduced an inference by the sole aid of *abstract reasoning*.

But facts *may* be produced, and facts incontrovertible, which put the *truth* of the inference beyond a doubt. The speeches and writings, which have been lately given to the public, contain decisive evidence on this subject : and I sincerely rejoice, that my Address to the Senate has been the means of bringing the Advocates of the Society to a full *explanation* on this subject. The tendency of their Society is now *apparent*. And the means of averting the *danger* of it will be the more readily applied, in proportion as that danger is more distinctly perceived. It would be a waste of time to quote every sentence, in which my objection to the *distribution of the Bible alone or without the Liturgy* has been publicly censured. Quotations have been already given from the Letter of Mr. Vansittart, and the speeches at Cambridge : and after *such* authority, we need not appeal to other Letters, or other speeches. It is sufficient to say that my objection to the omission of the Liturgy *has* been condemned by the advocates of the Society : that they have *generally* condemned it, wherever the Address has been noticed ; and that the most distinguished of these advocates have been the most *strenuous* in their reproof. The FACT therefore, that the practice of neglecting to give the Prayer Book with the Bible, is now *justified*, and justified by *Churchmen themselves*, is established beyond contradiction.

Shall we recommend it therefore to Churchmen to become members of a Society, which not only has a *tendency* to bring the Liturgy into neglect, but which already, as we know by experience, *produces* that effect ? If Churchmen, by becoming members of it, learn to *justify* the omission of the Liturgy, it cannot be supposed that they will *correct* that omission, by supplying, *individually*, what the Society in its corporate capacity *withholds*. If they learn to *censure* the position, that Churchmen should not content themselves with giving the *Bible alone*, it would be very extraordinary if they afterwards *conformed* to that position. And, since the vindication of the neglect in question is sanctioned by the authority, not merely of *minor* orators, and *minor* letter-writers (whose number indeed is now considerable) but of distinguished and exalted characters, whose opinions must influence the *public*, it would be a poor consolation to produce examples of churchmen, who, though members of this Society, are sensible of its defects, and endeavour

to supply them by their *individual* exertions. For such examples would not only be exceptions to the *general rule*, but exceptions to the *vindication* of that rule. We must argue, not from *single instances*, but from the *general* character of the Society, and its *general effects*.

And what *are* those general effects, but to bring into neglect the *bulwark of the established church*? When Churchmen and Dissenters unite in a society for the distribution of the *Bible alone*, even where the Church of *England* is established, and Churchmen conform to this regulation, because the Dissenters could not otherwise join with them, they sacrifice their *own* principles to those of the *Dissenters*.<sup>1</sup>—If the operations of the Society were confined to *foreign* countries, the objection, which is founded on the omission of the Liturgy, would at once be removed. The Liturgy of a *particular* church has no concern with the distribution of Bibles, where that church is *not established*. But where it is established, we must either preserve the *criterion and test* of that establishment, or abandon the establishment *altogether*. When Churchmen and Dissenters therefore agree to act on a principle, which *excludes* that criterion and test, and excludes it where the Church of *England* is established, an union of *such* parties on *such* a principle, must ultimately lead to THE RUIN OF THAT PARTY, WHICH MAKES THE SACRIFICE.

When Dissenters distribute the Bible alone, they do *all* that is requisite on *their* part. They have no Liturgy to distribute; and consequently omit *nothing*, which either their duty or their interest requires. But, when Churchmen, who *have* a Liturgy, neglect

<sup>1</sup> As far as I can judge, the very reason which is assigned for *not* giving the Prayer Book with the Bible, is a reason why Churchmen should be careful to *abstain* from that neglect. The more desirous the Dissenters may be, that the Prayer Book should be *omitted*, the more desirous should Churchmen be to *distribute* it. But if I understand Dr. Milner rightly, he considers the objection of the Dissenters to the Liturgy, as a reason not only why Churchmen may *omit* the Liturgy, when they give the Bible, but why they may omit it *with safety*. For he says, as the adoption of the Liturgy “is not to be expected while Dissenters of several denominations adhere to their present system of ceremonies and church government, I would not represent the distribution of the *Bible alone*, as a thing that cannot be done *with safety*, unless accompanied with the *Corrective* of a Prayer Book of the Church of England.”

to distribute it with the Bible, both duty and interest are neglected on *their* part. They neglect the distribution of the book, which constitutes the Churchman. They make approaches therefore to the Conventicle, while the Conventicle makes no approaches to the Church. Thus the Church is undermined, while the Conventicle remains entire.

So long therefore as the British and Foreign Bible Society retains its *present constitution*, I can discover no other remedy for the evil, which has been the subject of this Inquiry, than, that Churchmen should *withdraw* from it, and *transfer* their contributions and their influence to that true *Church of England Society*, the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.\*

### VIII.

I know, indeed, that Mr. Vansittart has prepared against this proposal so redoubtable a dilemma, that the advocates of the modern Society regard it as *impregnable*. If Churchmen withdraw themselves from the British and Foreign Bible Society, one of two consequences, says Mr. Vansittart, will inevitably follow. The Society will either cease to exist; or, it will be conducted in

\* I will here take the opportunity, in reference to the preceding Note, of exposing one of the many misrepresentations, to which my Defence of the Church has exposed me on every side. One of the Orators at Huntingdon, whose speech is recorded in the Cambridge Chronicle of January 10, 1812, took the liberty of informing his hearers, that there was an unnatural son of the Church, who did more than intimate "that the circulation of the pure Word of God without note or comment endangered her, and that those Scriptures stood in need of a CORRECTIVE." Of the misrepresentation in the first part of this sentence enough has been said already. But as the Orator has here ascribed to me a term, which I have *never used*, and I have the charity to suppose that he did it by mistake, misled perhaps by Dr. Milner's Speech, it is necessary for me to declare, not only that I never *applied* to the Liturgy the term *Corrective*, but that I have never spoken of it in such a manner, as to warrant the conclusion that I *consider* the Liturgy as a Corrective of the Bible. On the contrary, I represented, in that very Address, which has been the subject of criticism, the Bible as *the Corrective of the Liturgy*, not the Liturgy as a *Corrective of the Bible*. See the passage quoted in Note, p. 126, where I recommend the Liturgy on the ground that "the doctrines of the Liturgy are correctly derived from the Bible."

future by Dissenters alone. Now I readily admit that from those premises, one of these two consequences *must* follow, and therefore that no exception can be taken to the *dilemma itself*. Let us next attend to the *application* of it, and begin of course with the *first* part of the alternative.

“In the first case (says Mr. Vansittart) you would have crushed an establishment, which has done more for the diffusion of *Christianity*, than has been effected in the same space of time in any age since the *Apostolic*; which has in *seven years* been the means of preaching the gospel in *fifty-four* languages. This would indeed be putting out *one of the eyes of Britain*.”—Now even were it *true*, that the exertions of this Society in foreign countries were *entitled* to the panegyric here given them by Mr. Vansittart, I should not hesitate to declare that if its operations *at home* produce the mischief, which I have been endeavouring to show, *that* mischief will not be compensated by a translation of the Bible into fifty-four, nor *ten-times* fifty-four foreign languages. That system of universal philanthropy, whether political or religious, which carries men so far in their *general* benevolence, as to find “one of the eyes of Britain” any where but in *Britain itself*; must, in spite of that very patriotism, which Mr. Vansittart *himself* possesses, lead ultimately to the destruction, both of church and of state. I know, indeed, that Anacharsis Cloots, one of the instruments of the French Revolution, used to style himself the *Orator of the human race*, and to assert that a true philosopher should *divest* himself of the prejudices contracted by the *accidents* of birth and education; that he should love all countries *alike*; and be ready therefore to sacrifice his own good to the *good of mankind*. Nor is it long, since a universal philanthropist in *this* country asserted, that a father of a family should love *other* families as much as *his own*; and in consequence of this *extensive* benevolence, he left his own family *without food or raiment*, and when conducted before a magistrate, persisted in refusing them relief. But I am not ashamed to acknowledge that I would rather possess the *narrowness* of paternal and patriotic affection, than the boasted universality, which *extinguishes* that affection. I would not starve *my own* children to feed the children of the *stranger*, though I *give* to the stranger what I can *spare* from my own. Nor would I endanger the *Church*,



to which I belong, for the sake of sending Bibles, however numerous, to *foreign* churches, though I would gladly contribute to the latter, when it can be done *with safety to the former*.

Even therefore, if the exertions of the Society in foreign countries were really as great, as they have been represented, I should still think, the safety of our own Church required the *first* consideration. But since those exertions have been represented in such splendid and dazzling colors, since they have been considered as a new *propagation of the Gospel*, and since the various translations, which this Society is said to have made of the Scriptures, are regarded by its advocates as a *renewal of the Pentecost*, when the Apostles were enabled to speak to *all nations* in their several languages, I have thought it proper to inquire into the *foundation* of these pretensions, but shall reserve *that Inquiry* for an Appendix, because my arguments in the *present Inquiry* have no dependence whatever on the truth or falsehood of those pretensions, though I believe that hundreds and thousands have subscribed to the Society in *consequence* of those pretensions. Now it will appear from that Appendix, that the editions of the Scriptures, already printed or *caused to be printed* by this Society, in languages, *into which they had never been translated before*, so far from amounting to FIFTY-FOUR, which the *ambiguity* of Mr. Vansittart's expression, aided by the *splendor* of his description, might induce men to suppose, amount to a very few more than a *tenth* of that number.<sup>1</sup> It will further appear, that among the translations, *now* preparing in India, there are several in languages, into which the Scriptures had been *already* translated. It will appear that others had previously issued from the Missionary press at Serampore, *independently of the aid of the Society*. It will

<sup>1</sup> Previous to the late meeting at Ipswich for the formation of an Auxiliary Bible Society, Mr. Clarkson informed the Public, through the channel of the Suffolk Papers, that the Society had "*translated the Scriptures into no less than forty-three different languages or dialects.*" See the Ipswich Journal for November 23, 1811. But when Mr. Clarkson's letter was re-published in Cambridge, with a superscription alluding to my Address to the Senate (see Note, p. 103.) the learned Editor had the precaution to *amend* the text of his Author by inserting in a bracket [printed or] before the word "*translated.*" Now it makes a material difference whether *new translations* are made, or *old translations* reprinted: otherwise, we may say with equal justice, that the *King's Printer* is "the means of preaching the gospel" as often as he prints an English Bible. But if *this* is meant, men should not compare it with *the day of Pentecost*.

also appear that among the *European* languages, in which they have reprinted, or assisted in reprinting the Scriptures, some of them are spoken in countries, where the Bible is already so common and so cheap, that to speak of this Society as being "*the means of preaching the Gospel*" in those countries, is really to speak in terms not suited to the subject. And to speak of *Germany* as wanting Bibles, which the foreign Secretary himself has *hitherto* done : of *Germany*, which had printed the Scriptures in Hebrew, in Greek, in Latin, had in German, before England had printed them even in *English* : of *Germany*, the cradle of the Reformation, the birth-place of Luther, whose translation was partly transfused into our own ; of *Germany*, where the Canstein *Bible Institution*, established a century ago, can multiply copies by thousands and tens of thousands ; of *Germany*, where every bookseller can furnish German Bibles to any amount at a price inferior to *fourteen English pence* ; to speak of such a country as wanting Bibles, is more than could have been expected, even from the zeal of our present advocates.<sup>1</sup>

But since it is of no importance to the Inquiry *now* before us, whether the exertions of the Society in foreign countries are such, as have been represented, or not, I shall reserve every thing, which I have to say on that subject, for an Appendix. At present, let it be *granted* that this Society has printed or re-printed the Bible in fifty-four languages, let it be granted also that these Editions have been printed by the *sole* exertions of this society, let it be granted that *none* of them would have been printed, if this Society had not existed, let it be granted, even, that these fifty-four editions are in languages, in which the Scriptures *had never appeared before*, and lastly, let it be granted that the extinction of these *foreign translations* would be the extinction of "*one of the eyes of Britain*," yet, with all these concessions, it is no necessary consequence, that this eye would be extinguished, if Churchmen adopted the proposal, which was made at the end of the preceding section. For it is not proposed that Churchmen should

<sup>1</sup> I am aware that there is *now* in the press a Speech of the foreign Secretary which I have been desired to see, and which gives a *very different* account from all that had been said before. But all the other speeches at Cambridge, which now have been printed above a month in the Cambridge Chronicle, and have remained *uncontradicted* by the authors of them, might also, at this rate, be new-modelled in consequence of my objections to them. On this subject I shall say more in the Appendix.

*cease entirely* from the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts ; it was only proposed that they should *transfer* their contributions and influence. I proposed that they should *continue* to operate, and change only the *medium* of operation.

But it will be said that the *ancient* Bible Society has not the *activity* of the modern one. Let this be admitted. Let the inferiority of its energies be admitted in any proportion you please, yet, if those energies are exerted with *safety* to the established church, and the energies of the modern are *not*, we had better have security *at home*, with diminished energy *abroad*, than *diminish* our security at home, by *increasing* our energy abroad. If Churchmen, by a transfer of their contributions, should not increase the exertions of one society in the *same* proportion, as they would diminish the exertions of the other, the augmentation must at any rate be such, as to recommend itself to those, who are attached to the establishment. For a *moderate* increase in the influence of a Society, which is calculated to *support* the church, must be better than a *great* increase in the influence of a Society, which tends to *undermine* it. Nor should we forget that there is *one* respect, in which the *ancient* Bible Society is much better calculated to promote Christianity among Heathens, than the *modern* Society. For the latter is rather a *preparatory* Society : it *prepares* the way for the exertion of missionaries, by *supplying* them with Bibles in various languages. But no missionary can be *employed* by the Society ; for the sending of missionaries would be contrary to its constitution. Now the *former* Society not only *can*, but *really* does employ missionaries for the propagation of the Gospel, and would increase their numbers, with an augmentation of its funds. I know, indeed, that the advocates of the modern Society think nothing more is requisite, for conversion to Christianity, than the simple operations of their own body. They think the Bible, when *once distributed*, whether among Mahometans or Hindoos, whether among Tartars or Chinese, will make its *own way*, without the aid of a missionary, to explain it, and to enforce its doctrines. But as we have the authority, not only of St. Paul, but, of our Saviour himself, for believing that a *preacher* is requisite for the propagation of the Gospel, we may venture at least to doubt, whether the Bible, *unaccompanied* by a preacher, will be able, as is imagined, to extirpate, either the Koran or the Chouking, either the Vedam or the Shaster.

Let us now examine the *other* part of Mr. Vansittart's dilemma, namely, that if the British and Foreign Bible Society is continued at all, after Churchmen have withdrawn from it, the honor of conducting it will be left entirely to the Dissenters. And here, exclaims Mr. Vansittart, "Shall it be said that the Dissenters *alone* have carried the Word of God to *every nation under heaven*?" —Certainly not: nor does it at all follow from my proposal, which consists not in *abstaining* from action, but in action through *another medium*. Here Mr. Vansittart asks: "Can the Church of England stand so secure upon a *narrow and exclusive* policy, as by deserving the blessings, and uniting the prayers of all people, nations, and languages?" Now to speak of "all people, nations, and languages," or (in the words of the former quotation) of "*every nation under heaven*," as conferring a blessing on the modern Society, is, really, to speak in terms, with which their exertions, however great, can never be commensurate. And with respect to the *narrow policy* of Churchmen and Dissenters acting in *separate* Societies for the propagation of the Gospel, I should think that, if their *union* (how greatly soever it might raise their powers of action above the *sum* of their *separate* operations) yet contributed by its operation *at home* to endanger our own establishment, neither the wishes nor the praises of *foreign* nations would be sufficient to *avert* that danger.

But Mr. Vansittart seems to think that the danger would be increased, if Churchmen now withdrew, and left the Society in possession of the Dissenters. This is certainly a question of great importance: for there are many Churchmen, who are aware of the dangers of this Society, and who would not have become members of it when *first* established, yet are of opinion, that it is *now* the best policy to join it. Let us consider therefore with attention what Mr. Vansittart says on this subject. Speaking of the second part of the alternative he says: "The *dissenting interest* making up for these losses (namely from the secession of the Churchmen) by more extensive sacrifices, and an increase of *zeal and activity*, and availing itself of the assistance of the *foreign Societies already formed*, would carry on the Institution in nearly the same manner as before." Now, in this case, we should have a Society of Dissenters on the one hand, and a Society of Churchmen on the other,

both endeavouring to propagate the Gospel, yet acting on that *exclusive policy*, on which Mr. Vansittart asks whether the Church of England can "*stand so secure.*" In the first place, let us examine what accession of strength (that is, of *political* strength, according to the present argument) the Dissenters would derive from being left in possession of *the foreign societies already formed.* I have carefully examined the Reports of the Society, but I do not find that *any one* of their *foreign* auxiliary societies (though Mr. Dealtry also attaches the same importance to them<sup>1</sup>) have ever *contributed* to the parent Society. On the contrary, they are in the habit of *receiving* contributions: they *draw* from the parent Institution a portion of those supplies, which are afforded by the auxiliary society *at home.* Its power, therefore, as a *political engine*, is not increased, but *diminished* by the foreign Societies. And since their attachment depends on the supplies, which they receive, they would be ready to *transfer* their allegiance to any other Society, which had equal means of supplying their demands. Nay, a *hundred* such Societies might be instantly formed, by only giving notice, that such formation would be followed by pecuniary assistance. And with respect to an "increase of zeal and activity" on the part of the Dissenters, if Churchmen seceded from the Society, there would be infinitely less to apprehend from it, than from the present union of Churchmen and Dissenters in the distribution of Bibles, without the Liturgy, *at home.* If Churchmen in general resolved to act by themselves in the distribution of *Bibles and Prayer Books*, and Dissenters formed *another* Society for the distribution of *Bibles alone*, agreeably to their respective religious opinions, the two Societies might act, without mutual bitterness, and without an *encroachment* on each other's rights. Surely harmony may be preserved, without requiring that *one* party shall sacrifice to the *other.* Nor can such a sacrifice be necessary, for the purpose of conducting their operations *abroad.* The competition which might ensue, would be a competition for good: and, as each party would retain the full possession of its *own* doctrine and discipline, there would be no drawback on either side, to in-

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the case of a separation on the part of Churchmen, he says, the Dissenters "would probably retain the co-operation of the continental Societies."

interrupt the harmony of their proceedings. I agree with Mr. Vansittart (and *here* also with Dr. Milner) that the co-operation of Churchmen and Dissenters, "so far as they can *conscientiously* co-operate," is the best mode of lessening the evils of dissent. But when Churchmen and Dissenters co-operate *in the omission of the Liturgy*, which is the Bulwark of the Established Church, it is a co-operation, in which I must declare *for myself*, that as a Churchman, I cannot *conscientiously* join.

And with respect to the *danger*, for which such union is supposed a remedy, though I very clearly perceive that a Society of Dissenters, *professedly* formed for the advancement of religion, may easily become a *political* engine, yet I cannot subscribe to the opinion of those, who think that the *dissenting interest* of the Society in question will receive the most *effectual check* from the presence and co-operation of Churchmen. The most effectual barrier against the rising power of the Dissenters would be a general union of Churchmen with *Churchmen*, all acting on a common principle, and *that* principle, the principle of *the Established Church*. But the remedy *now* applied, in the co-operation of Churchmen with *Dissenters*, though it is *considered* as effectual, is really worse than the disease. While it provides against *contingent* evil, it creates a *present one*; in the hope of preventing *political* mischief, it undermines the established *religion*; without receiving the smallest compensation, it *surrenders* the interest of the Church, by bringing Churchmen and Dissenters to act upon a common principle, which excludes what is *essential to the Church*. Thus the strength of the establishment, instead of being retained within its *own* channel, for its *own* preservation, is not only diverted to another channel, but turns the current against *itself*.

## IX.

If indeed the Society would consent to *change* its constitution, to become only a Society for sending Bibles *abroad*, and leave to other Societies, whether of Churchmen or of Dissenters, to provide the poor of *this* country, either with *Bibles and Prayer Books*, or with *Bibles alone*, according to their respective tenets, the arguments, which have been used in this Inquiry, which apply

only to its *present* constitution, and its *home* department, would be obviated at once, as I have already declared, and already explained in the last paragraph of the fourth Section. If the *common principle*, on which the Society *now* acts, were so far *altered*, whether absolutely or relatively, as to render it equally *beneficial* to both parties, the equality, which is observed in the *government* of the Society, would become equally *fair* for both parties. If such an *alteration* were made in its mode of operation, as to restrict it to countries where the pre-eminence of our *own* church, which it is necessary to preserve *at home*, had no possible concern, *such an alteration* would render the common principle of action equally beneficial to *both* parties, and remove the injurious effects, which *now* arise from placing them on the same level in respect to the *government* of the Society, while the *terms*, on which they act, are not terms of *reciprocity*. In a Society, therefore, composed of Churchmen and Dissenters for the *sole* purpose of circulating the Scriptures in *foreign* countries, I would readily and heartily partake. I know indeed that Dr. Milner, while he held in his hand my Address to the Senate, took the liberty of declaring, "The principles of the learned author, I say *again*,<sup>1</sup> seem to me to have *nothing to do with Dissenters* in any concern, which is *connected with religion*." I am aware, also, that he almost immediately added in commendation of *himself*, that he did not "dread the Dissenters, as if they were *infected with a CONTAGION*." I am aware, also, that Mr. Dealtry has the same insinuation with Dr. Milner. For though he neither produced my Address to the Senate, nor named the Author of it, yet he so clearly *alluded* both to the one and to the other, that no one of the whole audience could be mistaken, in applying his remarks to *me*, especially, as among the persons who disapprove of the Society, I was the *only* one, who was mentioned on that day, and my Address was the subject of remark from the *very opening* of their proceedings. Now, says Mr. Dealtry, "The counsel of those gentlemen who are hostile to the Bible Society, and who recommend us to desert

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Milner had *previously* said, "There appears to me in their minds, a corner, in which resides a *rooted aversion* to any connexion in religious concerns with Christians of *any* denomination, if they dissent from the established church."

it, appear to me not a little extraordinary. They advise the Dissenters to have their own institution upon a similar basis, but would keep *us* from the CONTAGION." Here let me appeal to the public to determine, whether the respectful manner, in which I spake of the Dissenters, as well in the Sermon at St. Paul's, as in the Address to the Senate, whether the sentiments of religious liberty, which I have proclaimed in both, ought not to have secured me from a term of reproach, which though *apparently indirect* in its application, could not *fail* to be applied to me, could not fail therefore to excite the indignation of every Dissenter who heard it, and the indignation of every Dissenter who reads it, as if I regarded their intercourse *as contagious*. I leave the public to determine, whether I have deserved such treatment from *Churchmen and Clergymen*, who derive both their consequence and their support from that very establishment, which, whether mistakenly or not, I was laboring to defend. I will leave the public to judge of the *Christian spirit*, which animates my opponents, while they are professing a regard for the propagation of the *Gospel*. But I will declare for *myself*, and declare it both to Dr. Milner and Mr. Dealtry, that I fear no contagion from the *Dissenters*. Indeed I *know* of none. There are many, and *very* many among them, for whom, as *individuals*, I have the highest respect. I would associate with them even for *religious* purposes, as far as my duty allowed me; and if I went *beyond* that line, I am sure the Dissenters themselves would not *applaud* me. And were it *necessary*, I could appeal to dissenting families in this town, who themselves would bear witness, that, so far from dreading a *contagion* from their intercourse, I freely communicate the contributions which I can spare, without the smallest regard to *religious distinction*. I hope the reader will pardon this digression on a subject, which is merely personal; but as my adversaries have gone out of their way to *aspere* my character, I may take the same liberty, in order to *defend* it.\*

\* Having once digressed, I will take the opportunity of noticing some other passages in Mr. Dealtry's Speech, which I at first intended to pass over, because his allusions to my Address had been, for the *most* part, anticipated by other Speakers and Writers. But as the very circumstance, that an argument has been used by Mr. Dealtry, is regarded by many as a presumption in its favor, and this



To return however to an Association of Churchmen and Dissenters, for the purpose of distributing Bibles abroad, I *again* declare,

presumption is heightened by the author's confidence in himself, and his contempt of his adversaries, I will take a cursory view of the passages relating to the present subject. Mr. Dealtry asks, "Does the dispersion of the Scriptures tend to ruin the Church?" This question has been already answered to satiety.—He observes, "We have retained every syllable of our Liturgy, our Articles and Homilies." It is true, that the Liturgy is still *retained*: but if Churchmen justify the *omission* of it when they distribute Bibles to the poor, and even censure those, who *complain* of that omission, they are certainly on the road, which *leads* to the rejection of it.—Mr. Dealtry again exclaims, "Ruin the church? Where then is the discretion of our Archbishops and Bishops, &c. &c. who have *supported* the Bible Society?" Now a man may be *discreet*, and yet *mistaken*. Even *Bishops* may sometimes err. And Mr. Dealtry, who is so anxious to be thought a genuine Protestant, must be careful not to push this argument *too far*: for whoever makes a Bishop *infallible*, adopts a tenet of *Popery*.—But he considers the distribution of the *authorised version* by this Society as an argument for the security of the Church; and asks, in the event of Churchmen withdrawing from it, "*what security we should then have for the purity of the versions distributed throughout the United Kingdom?*" Now Churchmen would have the same security, as they have *always* had, since the Legislature has *forbidden* the printing of the *authorised version* unaccompanied with a comment, except in the two Universities, and by the King's Printer: and the Bible Society itself can obtain their copies of it from no other than these three sources. And with respect to *other versions*, it is not in the *power*, either of this or of *any* Society, to prevent their being made and distributed. But the Dissenters *in general*, if we except only the Socinians (who in spite of the Bible Society have a *new version* in extensive circulation) have *no inclination* to alter the *text* of the authorised version. Nor had they in the time of Charles the First. They are fully satisfied with *expounding* the present text: and against *false exposition* (the danger of which the Society *itself* admits by the credit which they take for giving it *without a comment*) they neglect to provide, since they *omit the Liturgy*. They neglect therefore to provide for the *real danger*. But says Mr. Dealtry, (who spake *immediately* after Dr. Milner, whose speech was a comment on my Address) "Let us never forget, that the Scriptures, *for the distribution of which we are THUS publicly arraigned*, are the Word of the most High." Now under the circumstances already described (and more might be added in corroboration) Mr. Dealtry himself will not pretend that he meant not to allude to *me*. I challenge him therefore, to *produce* the passage, in which I have arraigned, either *him* or any one, *for the distribution of the Scriptures*. If Mr. Dealtry *examined* my Address to the Senate, before he ventured to *condemn* it, he must have *known*, that at the very *beginning* of it I represented the *distribution of the Scriptures* as a "VERY LAUDABLE OBJECT;" he must have *known* that I objected *solely* to THE OMISSION OF THE LITURGY; he must have *known* therefore, when he declared he was arraigned *for the distribution of the Scriptures*, that what he declared was *contrary to fact*. On the one hand, if he

that such an Association would be entitled to the approbation of every Churchman. On the one hand, the *general* cause of Christianity would be promoted, while, on the other hand, our *own* Church, which *no* consideration should induce us to neglect, would be left *uninjured*. Here, then is the *true* line, which should guide the conduct of the Churchman. He may thus obtain the *full benefit* derived from the operations of the Society *abroad*, and obtain it *without injury at home*. Nay, this benefit would be *increased*, if the funds of the Society were *wholly* employed in the circulation of the Scriptures in *foreign* parts.

If then a regard for the distribution of the Scriptures is the *sole* motive, which induces men to partake of this Society, and it is their earnest wish to pursue that object in such a manner, as to *secure the established church*, why, it may be asked, should the Society refuse to change its constitution, in such a manner, as would answer *both* of those purposes, and render unnecessary the secession above proposed? Yet I hardly expect, that this change of constitution will be made. The Society, in its *present* form, has advantages, which not every member will abandon. Though

had not read my Address to the Senate, he took the liberty of laying a very heavy charge to a Professor of Divinity, at a public meeting within the precincts of his own University, at a public meeting composed chiefly of *young men* of that University, of young men who attend that Professor's Lectures, and of laying this heavy charge, with the consciousness of having *no foundation* for it.—If, instead of appealing to the *Address*, or to the *Sermon at St. Paul's*, from which the sentiments in the Address were borrowed, appeal is made to a *printed paper*, which Dr. Clarke produced at the public meeting, and of which I acknowledge myself the author, (see the second line of Note, p. 114. where I *allude* to it) that printed paper again contains the same sentiments, which had been advanced in the *Sermon*. The very first sentence is, "Whereas it has been insinuated that they, who object to the modern Bible Society, object to the distribution of the Bible, it is necessary to reply, that their objection is NOT to the distribution of the Bible, BUT to the distribution of the Bible alone." And in order to explain what is meant by the objection to the distribution of the Bible alone, is added; "If to the distribution of the Bible, which the two Societies have in common, were added the distribution of the Liturgy, which distinguishes the ancient Bible Society, and distinguishes the Churchman, the chief objection to the modern Bible Society would be removed." This remark is perfectly consonant with all that has been said in the present Inquiry, and shows that I have been always consistent in objecting NOT to the distribution of the Bible, BUT solely to the omission of the Liturgy.

its *splendor* is derived from the operations abroad, its *influence* depends on the operations at home. It *there* provides for *temporal*, as well as *spiritual* wants. It gives *power* to the dissenter, *popularity* to the churchman, and *interest* to the politician, which is useful at *all* times, and especially at the approach of a general election.

Cambridge,

23 January, 1812.



# LETTER

TO

*JOHN COKER, ESQ.*

IN ANSWER TO

HIS LETTER TO THE RIGHT HON. N. VANSITTART,

PUBLISHED IN THE OXFORD PAPER.



DEAR SIR,

I HAVE at all periods of my life had a particular objection to newspaper controversies; but to a controversy so amicable as that to which I am invited by your letter—which not only breathes the spirit of a gentleman, but the kindness of a friend—I cannot object, whatever may be its form. I consider your letter as a public appeal to the University of Oxford, against the sentiments expressed in my letter to Dr. MARSH. That letter was, in the first instance, a mere private answer to his communication to me of his Address to the Senate of Cambridge. I expressed myself as a Churchman writing to a Churchman, and without a view to publication. I afterwards published my sentiments under the sanction of the highest authority in that University, and I have had the satisfaction of learning that many of the most distinguished members of both Universities approve of

them. But I value both the judgment of our University, and your private opinion, too highly, not to offer some further explanation.

The question between us is not, whether the *Dissenters* are, or are not, *hostile* to the Established Church, but whether they can acquire any power of injuring it from the operations of the Bible Society. What are those operations? Simply, the distribution of the authorised version of the Scriptures. How can such a distribution be injurious to the Church by which that version was made, and which professes to rest upon it as the sole foundation of its doctrines—that version from which the Church has taken the language of her Liturgy, and which has been sanctioned from age to age by the authority of all our ecclesiastical rulers? But if we pertinaciously reject the assistance of the Dissenters in circulating *our* Bible, what should hinder every sect from having not only a *Bible Society*, but a *Bible*, of its own? The Unitarians have already their *improved* Version of the New Testament.—And who can estimate the extent of mischief, which might arise from such a collision of contending translations? To the *unlearned*, the version to which they are accustomed, stands in the place of an *original*; and to injure their opinion of its authenticity, is to shake their confidence in the Word of God itself.

We are apt to consider the Dissenters as narrow-minded and unreasonable; but while we condemn the prejudices of *other* men, let us be on our guard against *our own*. Let us for a moment suppose that the Bible Society, instead of being formed in London, had originated in the northern metropolis of our United Kingdom, under the patronage of the Church of Scotland, and that when their Episcopal brethren had petitioned to unite with them in the glorious work of diffusing the knowledge of their common Saviour, the Presbytery had replied by a haughty refusal—Keep

aloof! your piety, your learning, may be equal to ours; your zeal may be exemplary, your morals irreproachable—but you have *no lay elders*; you have *bishops and deans*; nay, more, you wear *white surplices*, and have *organs* in your churches: and we had rather the Scriptures should be for ever unknown, than disseminated by such polluted hands in conjunction with ours.—Such, my dear Sir, is the conduct which you would recommend to the Church of England. How far it would conduce to its honor, or its substantial interests, I leave to your cool reflection. My ardent wish, as I know it is yours, is, that the Church of England may be the first of Christian churches, and our country the first of nations—not for the purposes of any worldly splendor (whatever ambition of that kind I may once have felt), but as an instrument in the hands of Divine Providence of extensive benefit to mankind: the *first of churches*, as the model of *pure Faith* and *unfeigned Piety* to all the kindreds of the world: the *first of nations*, as the guardian and champion of Justice, Liberty, and the *true* Rights of Man. These, however, are high considerations, and above the reach of human foresight. To us it belongs to use our reason in seeking the most beneficial ends by the wisest means, and to leave the event with humble confidence to Him who Rules Above.

With respect to the latter part of your letter, I shall only observe that you greatly mistake the views of the Bible Society, if you suppose they condemn the use of notes and commentaries for elucidating the Scriptures. On the contrary, one of our most active members is now publishing a learned and elaborate commentary upon them. And it is a remarkable fact, that since the institution of the Bible Society, the best critical editions of the Scriptures, and the best commentaries on them, have risen in value in this country much beyond their proportion to other books (except such

as derive their chief value from their scarcity), and have been more frequently reprinted than in the course of a great number of years preceding. But the Society, as a body, takes no part in recommending the expositions of any man or any set of men. Confident that the Bible *alone* is able to give wisdom to the simple, it leaves to the Church, to every sect, to every individual, the right of selecting and recommending such further helps as may be necessary for critical research. In so doing every man will consult his own judgment, and the authority to which he has been accustomed to defer.

I am far, as you well know, from undervaluing the advantages of learning; and I should think, that upon the ground of *literary* merit, the Bible Society might claim some countenance in a learned University. We justly prize the profound erudition and indefatigable diligence of the compilers of the Polyglot Bible: but what a Polyglot has the Bible Society produced! Can it *lessen* the merit of such exertions, that they have been applied to *living* languages, and to purposes of immediate and important service to mankind?

But literary merit is not (except in a very subordinate degree) the aim of the Society, nor the tribunal of learning *that* at which it is to be judged. Its objects are of a higher order, and far more important to mankind; and its appeal is to every Christian heart. If you can point out to me any means of promoting these great objects as powerfully, as rapidly, as extensively, without incurring the dangers you apprehend from the Bible Society, I shall readily concur with you in adopting such means; but till you can do so, I think myself bound to persevere: nor do I believe they will *ever* be found except in some plan similar to ours. For it is not simply to the diffusion of the Bible, but to the co-operation of all Christians, to diffuse it, and to the effect



of such a co-operation on our own hearts, that I look, not only for the *establishment* of *Christian Faith*, but the *extension* of *Christian Charity*.

I am, &c.

(Signed)

N. VANSITTART.

*Great George Street,*

*12th Feb. 1812.*



## SECOND LETTER

TO

*THE REV. DR. MARSH,*

OCCASIONED BY HIS INQUIRY, &c.

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DEAR SIR,

IF I were to leave wholly unnoticed the further arguments which, since I addressed you on the 4th of December last, you have urged against the Bible Society in your *Inquiry*, it might appear to proceed, either from some change in my own sentiments on that subject, or from a want of attention to yours; which would be the more unbecoming on my part, on account of the honorable manner in which you are pleased to speak of my Letter.

I feel myself bound, therefore, to declare that my opinions not only remain unaltered, but have even received some confirmation from perceiving that all the ingenuity and research you have employed in attempting to support your objections to the Society have, so far as I can judge, completely failed in their effect.

These sentiments I should have communicated to you sooner, if I had not been desirous of seeing your case complete, and judging whether, in addition to the few observations I shall think it necessary to make on the *Inquiry* itself,

it might not be proper to add some on the Appendix, by which it is at a future time to be followed.

I conceive, however, that as my object is not to go into an exact and methodical examination of your allegations in their order, much less to enter into any of your personal discussions with your other opponents, but to confine myself to a few general heads, there can be no sufficient reason for further delay. And by so confining myself, I think I shall be able, in the shortest possible compass, to do full justice to your arguments, which appear to me to be comprised in three points—

First, That the Bible Society produces a disregard of the Liturgy.

Secondly, That its foreign operations have been mis-stated and exaggerated. And,

Thirdly, That its real objects are of a political, and not a religious nature.

It must, I think, be obvious to whoever reads your Inquiry, that you have totally changed the ground of objection on which you rested, in your Address to the Senate of Cambridge.

In your *Address*, the objection relied upon was an apprehension that, as the power and influence of the Bible Society increased, *other* objects hostile to the Church might be associated with the main object; and, in answer to that, I proposed that the friends of the Church should, by joining the Society, acquire such a preponderating force in it, that it would be impossible for the Dissenters, should they be desirous of it, to direct the efforts of the Society to any other object. But, in the *Inquiry*, your objection is to the *main and avowed object itself*, namely, that of the circulation of the *Scriptures unaccompanied by the Liturgy, or by any other exposition or comment whatever*.

Of the first of these objections, which I discussed in my

former Letter, I shall say nothing at present. With respect to the latter, I must first observe, that you do the members of the Church of England, who belong to the Bible Society, great injustice, if you suspect them of any want of regard to the Liturgy. We acknowledge its lawful authority, we venerate its piety, we admire its beauty, we recommend its use by our example, our influence, and distribution ; we all adhere to its forms in the public service of the Church, and many of us in our own families.

On this point it is easy to have satisfactory proof. Many of us are also members of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. Let it be examined, whether, in our application to that Society for books, there is a smaller proportion of Prayer-books than in those of its other members, who do not belong to the Bible Society. To the disregard to the Liturgy, which you suppose to have been produced by the Bible Society, if real, the Reports of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge must bear conclusive evidence. We shall, in that case, find that during the growth of the Bible Society, the demand for Prayer-books for distribution has been gradually lessening. But what is the fact ? The number of Prayer-books delivered by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, to its members on an average of the three years immediately previous to the institution of the Bible Society (viz. 1802-3-4), was 13,546 ; the average of the last three years was 19,815, being an *increase* of more than one half. I am informed also, that the ordinary sale of Prayer-books has greatly increased in the same period.—So much for the disregard of the Liturgy, produced by the Bible Society.

But we do not refuse to associate with those who may object to the Liturgy, for the purpose of diffusing the knowledge of those Scriptures, which they, as well as we, acknowledge to be the sole fountains of religious truth.

We venerate the Liturgy, as one of the most valuable and important of human compositions ; but when attempts are made to place it on a level with the Bible—to assert that the Bible cannot safely be circulated without it, we are obliged to confess, that the difference is no less than between *divine perfection*, and *human frailty*.

Such a claim of equality with the Bible, the venerable and holy men who compiled our Liturgy would have disclaimed with horror. There is no point on which they more firmly insist than upon the complete and absolute sufficiency of the Scriptures, in matters of faith : this is indeed the very basis of the Reformation ; while the authority of the Church in points of doctrine is no less avowedly the foundation of Popery.

The danger of the perversion of Scripture, on which you so much insist, is the very argument used by the Papists in defence of the denial of the Bible to the laity. And indeed, to such a length do you carry your argument,<sup>1</sup> that I do not know what answer you could give to a Catholic Doctor who should justify the practice of his church by your authority.

But should we, by adopting the Liturgy as an infallible exposition of Scripture, gain the point of uniformity of doctrine ? By no means—*You* contend<sup>2</sup> that it is *impossible* to reconcile the language of the Liturgy with CALVIN'S doctrine. But *other* men, whose sincerity, piety, and learning are indisputable, contend that the Liturgy and the Articles cannot be understood in any other than a Calvinistic sense. My opinion would be of no weight in deciding such a question between you ; but I should be sorry not to embrace, as faithful and genuine sons of the Church

<sup>1</sup> Page .04 and 110.

<sup>2</sup> Page 124, note.

to which I belong, many who hold each of these contradictory opinions.

With reference to this point of the sufficiency of Scripture, I cited the words of Chillingworth, as one of the ablest advocates of the Protestant cause ; but to Chillingworth you think fit to object : and it seems to me unnecessary to examine the validity of your objections, because I can support my argument by an authority from which you cannot appeal, namely that of the *Church of England itself*, speaking in the Homilies.

“ There is no truth nor doctrine,” says the first Homily (on reading the Scriptures,) “ necessary for our justification and everlasting salvation, but that is, or may be, drawn out of that fountain and well of truth.”

“ If it shall require to teach any truth, or reprove false doctrine ; to rebuke any vice, to commend any virtue, to give good counsel, to comfort, or exhort, or to do any thing requisite for our salvation ; all these things (saith St. Chrysostom) we may learn plentifully of the Scripture.”

“ If to know God aright,” says the twenty-second Homily, “ be an occasion of evil, then we must needs grant that the learning and reading of the Holy Scriptures is the cause of heresy, carnal liberty, and the subversion of good orders. But the knowledge of God and of ourselves, is so far from being an occasion of evil, that it is the readiest, yea, the only means to bridle carnal liberty, and to kill all our fleshly affections. And the ordinary way to attain this knowledge, is with diligence to hear and read the Holy Scriptures. For the whole Scriptures, saith St. Paul, were given by the inspiration of God. And shall we Christian men think to learn the knowledge of God and of ourselves in any earthly man’s work or writing, sooner or better than in the Holy Scriptures written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost? If we desire the knowledge of heavenly

wisdom, why had we rather learn the same of man than of God himself, who, as St. James saith, is the Giver of wisdom? Yet why will we not learn it at Christ's own mouth, who promising to be present with the Church to the world's end, doth perform his promise; in that he is not only with us by his grace and tender pity, but also in this, that he speaketh presently unto us in the Holy Scriptures, to the great and endless comfort of all them that have any feeling of God at all in them."

Could the men by whom such passages as these were written have foreseen, that in the Church which they founded it would be considered as an *offence* to distribute the Bible unaccompanied by any human work?

Could they, *humble* as they were *pious*, have been supposed to claim on behalf of their own writings an equality with those Scriptures by which they were guided, and for which some of them laid down their lives?

Yet this claim of equality is all which the members of the Bible Society, who belong to the Church of England, deny. They stand on the line of demarcation which separates the Papist from the Protestant. They assert the wide distinction between the authority of an infallible and of a fallible church—but do they forsake the Church where the Liturgy is used? Do they countenance the disregard of it in others? The very contrary is the fact; and on this point they are willing to stake the issue of the question.

Nor can it be doubted that the association of a large proportion of Churchmen in the Bible Society, must tend to render the Dissenters less adverse to the Liturgy. They must learn to respect what they know to be held in veneration by men whom they esteem.

But in proportion as their good-will to the Liturgy is now conciliated by the habit of acting in co-operation with



Churchmen, must any prejudices they may entertain respecting it be inflamed by such a secession of the Churchmen from the Society as you recommend.

Nor can I think it clear, that the Society, by such a secession, would be so reduced in numbers and influence as to become inconsiderable. The union has been formed, the machine is organized, and it might continue to work.

The Dissenters, by being left in the sole possession of the Society, might obtain a large accession of influence and reputation. The Foreign Societies would, as I have observed, naturally adhere to them. The efforts of these Societies you value at a very low rate upon this sole ground, that they have received pecuniary assistance from the British Society, instead of contributing to it. Supposing this to be the case with respect to *all* the Foreign Societies, it would only follow, that you estimate the strength of a Society by no other criterion than its pecuniary means. You count for nothing the zeal and activity of these Societies, though you usually represent the zeal and activity of the Dissenters as sufficiently formidable. You overlook the gratitude and attachment of so many individuals, many of whom are in distinguished stations; and the approbation and countenance of several sovereigns. The Emperor of Russia, the late and the present King of Sweden, and the King of Prussia, have distinctly expressed their approbation of the proceedings of the Society. Would you, with the views you entertain of the spirit and designs of the Dissenters, think it wise or safe to leave such a correspondence entirely in their hands? And what opinion do you think would be formed abroad of the liberality and judgment of the Church of England in rejecting and renouncing such an instrument of general

good? What will be thought even of our present jealousies and disputes?

But zeal and activity, and attachment, are arms of no mean power—such as will often supply the place of money, and such as money cannot always purchase. I hope they do not belong exclusively to the Dissenters: but it is for the Church to determine whether she will avail herself for the noblest purposes of those qualities which they are admitted to possess, or run the risk of seeing them turned against her.

I should indeed agree with you in thinking the Dissenters formidable, if their spirit, and the spirit also of the rulers of the Church, were now such as in the unhappy times to which you have alluded at so much length.

But I think it altogether unnecessary to discuss the circumstances which attended the suppression of the Liturgy in the great rebellion, because they seem to me totally irrelevant to the present question.

Nothing can be more dissimilar to the state of government, and the political constitution of the country in the reign of Charles the First, than their actual situation. Nor have the ecclesiastical arrangements and the public opinions on religious subjects any greater resemblance. Compare the civil and military establishments, and all the means of influence possessed by the government at that time, and at the present. Compare the violent exertions of unsettled prerogative on the one hand, and the eager claim of undefined privileges and rights on the other, with the orderly and regular system which has been established since the Revolution. Compare the harsh exertions of ecclesiastical authority in the former period, of authority often striving, by means unjustified by the forms of English law, and still more repugnant to its spirit, to repress the turbulence and

ferment of a recent and unsettled reformation of religion, with the calm and mild exercise we have seen, for a century past, of the clerical jurisdiction, always directed by law, and guided by moderation; and then say whether there is now any reason to apprehend the renewal of that collision and conflict of passions and opinions in which the constitution of the Church and that of the State alike were overthrown.

The next subject to be examined is that of the *foreign* operations of the Bible Society; and upon this I began to hope we were agreed. Its operations *abroad*, you say,<sup>1</sup> are not only unobjectionable, but *highly laudable*. This praise is, however, qualified in the very next line in a manner which, I confess, struck me with some surprize, viz. that these operations have been described in terms which violate both *truth* and *candor*—surprise, not that you should make such a charge if you think it well founded; but that you should make the charge, and reserve the proof of it for an Appendix, not yet published, after the expiration of nearly two months. I have waited with some impatience for the publication of that Appendix, not only from regard to the character of the Society, but because I know no one who has described its foreign transactions in terms of higher commendation than myself: and though the general tone of the Inquiry, as well as of all our communications, convinces me that I am not designedly alluded to; yet I cannot feel easy under the idea of having, however unintentionally, fallen under the suspicion of a violation of *truth* and *candor*.

After waiting some time in vain for the publication of this appendix, I satisfied myself, by a careful review of what I had published, that I had asserted nothing but the *truth*;

<sup>1</sup> Page 101.

and how far I have offended against *candor* I am willing to leave the public to judge. I have asserted (and this is the only fact I have asserted on the subject) that the Bible Society has afforded the means of preaching the Gospel in *fifty-four* languages. In this there is a slight error, but it is an error of *defect*. The real number (exclusive of the Ethiopic, which is in a state of preparation) is *fifty-eight*,<sup>1</sup> of

<sup>1</sup> Languages or Dialects in which the British and Foreign Bible Society has been instrumental in diffusing the Holy Scriptures.

English.		*Calmuck.
Welsh.		Turkish.
Gaelic.		Arabic.
Manks.		Ancient Greek.
Irish.		Modern Greek.
*Mohawk (in part new.)		Tamul.
*Esquimaux.		Bengalee.
German.		Hindostanee.
Bohemian.		*Malayalim.
Swedish.		*Chinese.
Finnish.		*Cingalese.
Laponese.		*Burgis.
Danish.		*Maldivian.
Icelandic.		Malay.
Polish.		*Orissa.
Hungarian.		*Persian.
Slavonic.		*Persic, or pure Persian.
Lithuanian.		*Burman.
Lettonian,	} Two dialects of	*Siamese.
Esthonian,		*Afghan.
Ladinsche,	} Two dialects	*Jagatai, or original Turco-
Churwelsche,		man.
	nese.	*Sanscrit.
Italian.		*Seek.
Spanish.		*Telinga.
Portuguese.		*Carnatica.
French.		*Macassar.
Dutch.		*Rakheng.

which about *twenty-five*, and not, as you insinuate, *five or six only*,<sup>1</sup> are translations into languages in which the Scriptures have not been published before. I never said that the whole were translations made for the first time, nor could I be supposed to mean any such thing, as the English authorised version has always been included in the enumeration. But I could not think it necessary to enter into an explanation on this point, because the history of each of these translations, and the authorities on which it is founded, are distinctly detailed in the Reports of the Society. It is also pointed out with no less exactness in what *degree* the Society has contributed to every publication of the Scriptures, of which it has not borne the *entire* charge. And, after making all these proper deductions, which are, indeed, necessary to bring the fact within the bounds of credibility, the exertions of the Society will still excite just astonishment when compared not only with those of any other English Society, for there is no other whose operations can be named in competition with them, but with the performances of the College de Propagandâ Fide, supported by the united zeal and labors of the monastic orders, and the unbounded liberality of the Catholic powers. And it deserves to be further remarked that though in many instances, the Society has defrayed only a *part* of the expense of publishing a translation, yet that, in all those cases, the assistance of the Society has been most important, and, in the greater part of them, represented as absolutely indispensable to the execution of the work.

\*Mahratta.  
\*Sinhala Pali.

| \*Baloch.  
| \*Pushtu.

Total 58, exclusive of the Ethiopic.

The languages marked with an asterisk are those into which the Scriptures are not known to have been before translated.

<sup>1</sup> Page 141.

You seem, indeed, to consider some of these exertions, especially with respect to Germany, as superfluous. It is unnecessary to explain, why, in so extensive a country as Germany, divided into so many sovereignties, and greatly differing in the religion and manners of its several parts, the Bible might be almost unknown in some districts, while, in others, it was cheap and plentiful; it is sufficient to state, in general terms, that the Bible has been no where published or dispersed by the Society, except where the want of it has been greatly complained of, and where it has been received with the most lively gratitude. The supplications which preceded the gift, and the thankfulness which followed it, sufficiently prove its necessity. Your readers might, indeed, infer the contrary, from your observations respecting the Canstein Institution; but such of them as are unacquainted with the Bible Society will be somewhat surprised to find that the fullest, if not the only, account in English of the Canstein Institution is to be found in the second report of the Society; that the Head of that Institution was in constant correspondence with them, so long as correspondence could be maintained with the Continent, and that the Institution has been employed to a large extent by the Society wherever its aid could be available.

'That hundreds and thousands have, as you say,' subscribed to the Society in consequence of its *foreign operations* (or as you are pleased to call them, *pretensions*), I firmly believe, and also that they have conferred an inestimable benefit on mankind by so doing: and I trust, that not only *thousands*, but *tens of thousands*, will continue to subscribe notwithstanding the publication of the *threatened Appendix*, in which you have undertaken to *prove those charges* which *without any proof* you have now thought proper to *allege*.

I trust that the support of the public will become so extensive and decided as to enable the Society, in the most exact and extensive sense, *to carry the Gospel to every nation under heaven*; and though these are terms to which you think ' the exertions of the Society can *never* be commensurate, I must remind you, that in eight years they have extended from China to Peru : and from Iceland to the Cape of Good Hope.

That these exertions can be injurious to the Church of England, I cannot think so meanly of the Church as to admit. It would be with the deepest regret that I should discover that the prosperity of the Church of England was incompatible with the establishment of the universal Church of Christ ; because the inevitable result of such a discovery would be a conviction that the Church of England was not (as I have always thought it) a genuine and distinguished portion of that true Church. And you concur so far in the same opinion as to be willing to permit the existence of the Bible Society, and even to allow Dissenters to belong to it, provided its operations are exclusively directed abroad.

I am not surprised that you should resort to this suggestion, which has, indeed, from the first formation of the Society, been the proposal of its *enemies* ; but you must not expect its *friends* to acquiesce in a proposition which would inevitably occasion its destruction.

In the first place, the funds of the Society depend principally upon the formation and continuance of Auxiliary Societies. Now though these Societies cheerfully contribute a part of their subscriptions for the promotion of the *general* plans of the Bible Society, yet their more direct and immediate object is the supply of the *local wants* of their respective districts. They are by no means actuated by that spirit

of *universal philanthropy* which you are pleased ' to ridicule (and which, so far as it is affected and hypocritical, well deserves your ridicule,) but by the maxim of ordinary prudence, to do good *first at home*. They would certainly fall to pieces, if deprived of the means of being locally useful ; and with them the principal Society would sink. But supposing, that, contrary to all probability, it could continue its existence, what co-operation could be expected among men united for a common exertion *abroad*, upon principles which implied disunion, jealousy, and enmity at *home* ? men who would naturally belong to rival and unfriendly Societies in their respective neighbourhoods, and who would bring into their common discussions the hostile passions which had actuated their previous contentions.

How different from the meetings of the Bible Society, in which the Churchman and Dissenter meet to lay aside their prejudices, and, forgetting partial distinctions, look only to the *Scriptures*, which they *alike acknowledge*, and the *Saviour* whom they *equally adore* ; and learn to carry away into the intercourse of life the spirit of candor, benevolence, and union ! To the diffusion of such a spirit I look with the sincerest pleasure, and the most anxious expectation ; and I am persuaded that the extension of the Bible Society will most effectually promote it.

But there is another Society founded upon the same principles, and equally entitled to *my* commendation, and to *your* censure—it is the Naval and Military Bible Society.

By the 3d of its *Laws and Regulations*, it is directed that “ *no other books shall be given, or sold at reduced prices, by this society, than Bibles and New Testaments, according to the authorised version, without note or comment.*” And upon this rule, the committee observe in the



Account prefixed to their last Report (1811), “As the Society engage to distribute only Bibles and Testaments, according to the authorised version, without note or comment; it is hoped that this consideration will tend to unite all good men who regard the interest of true religion, in supporting an Institution, on the importance of which there can be no difference of opinion.” There is no exclusion of Dissenters from this society, nor even any limitation of the number of them who may be admitted on the committee—so that, on your principles, its constitution is even more dangerous than that of the British and Foreign Bible Society; whose example indeed it holds up as a model for imitation. “Let this Society,” says its last Report, “imitate the bright example of the British and Foreign Bible Society.”

Yet this Society has existed from the year 1780, without exciting any of those alarms which immediately arose on the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and which you are so zealously endeavouring to propagate.

Can it be so dangerous to distribute the *Bible without the Prayer Book in civil life*, yet perfectly safe to do it throughout the *Navy and Army*? Can our *naval and military forces* be trained without danger in a *disregard of the Liturgy*, and can you have forgotten, that in the times to which you are so fond of recurring, it was a *fanatical army* which overturned both the *altar and the throne*!

The friends of the British and Foreign Society, who trust in the discretion of the Prelates who support it, and conclude that an institution, sanctioned by their authority, cannot be injurious to the Church, might indeed reasonably believe that it could be in no danger from another Society, of which the Archbishop of Canterbury was the president,

and the Bishops of London and Durham vice-presidents. But you, who know that men may be *discreet*, and yet *mistaken*, can derive no consolation from such a source; but must class those distinguished Prelates among the *Bishops who may sometimes err*.<sup>1</sup>

The same gratuitous supposition of disregard to the Liturgy on which you throughout insist, leads to the no less gratuitous and unfounded supposition of a design to make the Society an instrument for bringing about a repeal of the Test Act. The *Liturgy* (you say <sup>2</sup>) is the *test of a Churchman*; the Bible Society leads to a disregard of the Liturgy; *therefore*, the Bible Society will lead to a repeal (not of the *Liturgy*, but) of the *Test Act*. I shall not examine the logic of your *conclusion*, because I deny your *minor*. Instead of leading to a disregard of the Liturgy, I have no doubt that among Churchmen the Bible Society tends to recommend and endear it. It is, I think, impossible to engage seriously in the concerns of the Society without imbibing some portion of the spirit by which it is actuated, and without acquiring a deeper sense of the inestimable value of the Scriptures, and of their practical and personal importance to ourselves. We cannot be earnest in recommending the Bible to others without applying it to our own hearts; and we cannot do so without becoming better Churchmen, because better Christians and better men. We become more interested in the Liturgy, because more sensible of the scriptural foundation on which it rests, and more generally alive to the feelings of religion, and assiduous in the performance of its public duties.

With respect to the *Test Act*, I do not believe that, in principle at least, we should differ. There can be no doubt that the most glorious and happy state of religion upon

<sup>1</sup> Page 149, note.

<sup>2</sup> Page 127.

earth would be that of a community universally agreeing in the belief and practice of true Christianity, unmixed with prejudice or error. But this is a state rather to be desired than hoped, in the present condition of man.

But there is an inferior degree of happiness more within our prospect, and yet, perhaps, as perfect as human infirmity allows us to hope for, wherein, though all differences of opinion should not be extinguished, yet they may be so refined from all party prejudices and interested views, so softened by the spirit of charity and mutual conciliation, and so controlled by agreement in the leading principles, and zeal for the general interests of Christianity, that no sect or persuasion should be tempted to make religion subservient to secular views, or to employ political power to the prejudice of others.

In such a state of things you will agree with me, that the Test Act would be unnecessary ; but I will admit to you, that the present situation of this country is, in my opinion, very different from that which I have described. I confess, however, that I believe the Bible Society to have a strong tendency to produce such a state of things, and it is one of the points in which I most admire it. In *this* way it *may* become a means of removing the Test Act—not by the depression of the Church—not by any accession of political power to the Dissenters—but by burying their differences in cordial union, and leading both parties to a more sincere and genuine practice of religion. But in any other way, I will venture to affirm, that the Bible Society, is as little likely to lead to a repeal of the Test Act, as to a repeal of the Habeas Corpus Act. Any attempt to convert the Society to political purposes would certainly be fatal to the Society itself : and of this all the parties composing it are equally convinced.

That you should think fit to conclude your Inquiry by

an insinuation of such purposes, I cannot but regret; and you must be sensible that the imputation of unavowed intentions to an opponent is not only one of the most *vulgar*, but one of the most *dangerous* arts of controversy. Such imputations are *easy to be made, difficult to be refuted*, but almost always may be *retorted with effect*. If, as you allege, the Bible Society can provide for *temporal*, as well as *spiritual* wants (which, however, I am sorry, for the sake of the poor, to say is not the case,) *temporal*, as well as *spiritual* wants may be provided for, by the profession of a distinguished zeal for the interests of the Church. If the Bible Society can give *popularity* to the *Churchman*, and *interest* to the *politician*, the cry that the *Church is in danger*, can *equally* answer both those purposes; and nothing has more frequently been found *useful at the approach of a general election*.<sup>1</sup>

I beg, however, to disclaim the use of all such imputations otherwise than as specimens of your own mode of reasoning. I feel their injustice in *my own* case—I willingly admit it in *yours*. I know that *I* could find readier ways to distinction and advancement than by *crying up the Bible Society*—I with pleasure allow to *you* far stronger and more honorable claims than that of *crying it down*.

But, though I can easily suppose the alarms professed for the safety of the Church to be sincere and unaffected, I believe them to be neither justified by argument, nor founded in reason, nor unattended with injury to the Church itself. There never was a time when the Legislature more carefully guarded, or more liberally promoted, the interests of the Church. In the greatest pressure of public exertion, when it would appear hardly justifiable to add any thing to the expenditure of the nation for any purpose which did

<sup>1</sup> Page 150.

not arise out of the immediate exigency of the times, grants of unexampled liberality have been made for the support of the national religion.'

*' Grants for ecclesiastical Purposes.*

GREAT BRITAIN.

1809. To the Governors of Queen Ann's Bounty, for the augmentation of small livings - - - - £100,000

1810. To the Governors of Queen Ann's Bounty - - - - 100,000

1811. To the Governors of Queen Ann's Bounty - - - - 100,000

Exclusive of the above grants, three Acts of Parliament have passed, in the years 1806, 1809, & 1810, for exonerating livings not exceeding £150 a year, from the Land Tax, charged upon them, to the amount of £8000 a year. See 46 G. III. c. 133. 49 G. III. c. 67. 50 G. III. c. 58.

N. B. No former parliamentary grants of this kind appear to have been made in Great Britain.

IRELAND.

1809. To the Board of First Fruits for building churches and glebe-houses - - - £10,000  
Irish.

1810. To the same - - 10,000  
Irish.

Further grant  
to the same - - - 50,000  
British.

1811. To the same - - 10,000  
Irish.

Further grant  
to the same - - - 50,000  
British.

N. B. From the Union to the year 1808, the sum of £5000 Irish was annually granted to the Board of First-Fruits. In 1808 the grant was increased to £10,000.

This would of itself go far towards proving, what I think further observation will confirm, that there is among us a growing attachment to religion. To no other cause can I attribute the rapid growth of the Bible Society, which again, by a reciprocal action of the most beneficial kind, powerfully contributes to strengthen and extend this attachment.

Yet I will own that there are possible cases in which I think danger may arise to the Church—one of them would be, if the *abuses* of the Church should be confounded with its *interests*. The spirit of the age is liberally attentive to all fair claims; but it is an inquisitive and scrutinizing age, and many circumstances which formerly attracted little notice, are now drawn into full light. The returns of the non-resident clergy, for instance, are now annually printed. If the friends of the Church, instead of taking the lead in a mild reform of abuses, contend obstinately for their protection, and treat every man as an enemy who aims at reform, they will certainly be overpowered at last, and the corrective applied by those who will apply it with no sparing hand.

The voice of the public is now *with* the Church—it may, by a pertinacious resistance to reasonable expectations, be turned *against* her.

It may also be turned against her, and with consequences perhaps, not less alarming, by the display of a distrustful and repulsive spirit towards those who feel that they merit no sentiment of hostility.

The cause of the Church may likewise suffer, in no inconsiderable degree, from ill-judging advocates. If her alleged defenders insist on arguments so repugnant to the common sense and feelings of mankind, that they can only be supported by treating the clearest and simplest subjects

as the most intricate and perplexed,<sup>1</sup> the ridicule which must attach itself to such arguments, however ingeniously maintained, cannot fail, in a certain degree, to be reflected on the Church. For after all that ingenuity and subtlety can do, the public opinion must at last be decided by the plain reason of plain men. With such, the appeal is always to fact and experience. They will not believe it to be an offence to carry home to the habitations of the poor and ignorant that Bible *alone*, which is daily read in the Church, as *alone* containing the *words of everlasting life*. They will not believe the members of the Bible Society to be bad Churchmen (with whatever dexterity you may prove that they must be so), while they perform, both in the Church and in society, the offices of good men and good Christians.

But from the apprehension of all these dangers, the support which the Bible Society has received from so large a proportion of the clerical body, in a great degree relieves my mind. It evinces a liberality of sentiment, and a conciliatory disposition, from which the happiest consequences may be expected. In speaking of this proportion, we must keep in view the *recent* establishment of the Society, and the great numbers both of the clergy and laity who have had no opportunity of joining it. It is the common practice of the opponents of the Society to represent all who do not actually subscribe to it as its adversaries. The fact is, that great numbers are even ignorant of its existence. I have repeatedly, among my own acquaintance, met with persons of rank and education, and of extensive general information, who had never heard of such a Society—I do not recollect to have met with *one* who, when its object and operations were, for the first time, explained to him, failed

<sup>1</sup> Page 128.

to express the most decided approbation of them—Such is the first natural movement of an unprejudiced mind.

But of those who are acquainted with the Society, great numbers are withheld from subscribing by motives very different from disapprobation. It is but too true, that a large portion of the clergy are in circumstances which make even a small subscription a matter of serious concern to them. Many have for a long time been members of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, and cannot conveniently contribute to *both* Societies. Many are unable to do it to *either*. The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge itself, which you uphold as a true Church of England Society, and which has subsisted more than a century, would, if examined by the same rule, be likewise condemned. The number of parishes in England is upwards of 11,000; yet the total number of clergymen belonging to that Society is, according to the last Report, only about 2900.

By the spirit of conciliation which I have mentioned, and which does so much honor to the clergy of the present day, another danger is averted from the Church not less considerable than those I have before alluded to—that of a discordance of sentiment between the clergy and the laity. It is natural and proper that the clergy, and especially those in the most dignified situations, should watch with peculiar caution any thing which may be supposed to tend to religious innovation, and it is no less natural that they should sometimes be suspected of pushing their caution to an excess; and that in times when the public attention is strongly turned to reform, some collision of opinion should arise between them and the laity, which may lead to the most dangerous consequences. But the clergy can never more justly merit, or more surely acquire, the confidence of their flocks than by keeping pace with, and even taking the lead of them



in a plan of general conciliation and extensive beneficence—a plan founded on the surrender of ancient prejudices, and leading to the establishment of universal concord.

To say that either the Church or the State is free from danger, would, in times like the present, be an empty and presumptuous boast. The earthquake, by which so many churches and so many states have been shattered into ruin, still continues to heave the ground; and it appears evident that these dreadful convulsions of the moral and political world are, by the unseen councils of Providence, directed to bring about some great renovation in the religious state of man. We cannot doubt indeed that the end is wise and beneficial, yet it is impossible for us to judge with what degree of temporary calamity the means may be attended. What part, whether of action or of suffering, we may be doomed to bear in these awful changes, it is not for human wisdom to pronounce; and is perhaps kindly hidden in the darkness of futurity. But I am inclined to indulge in the more pleasing prospect, and to view the Church of England as rising to greater eminence and shining with brighter lustre,

Amidst public difficulty and private embarrassment, I see the hand of Charity extended to every species of distress, with an extent of bounty, not only unknown to former times, but which would have been incredible to them. I see every where new institutions forming; yet old establishments supported; and let it be remembered, that in these noble works, which I trust will rise in remembrance before God on behalf of this nation, the Dissenters claim their full share with the Church of England.—I see the ships of Britain no longer tearing the natives of Africa from their parent soil, but carrying to them the arts of civilized life, and the blessings of the Gospel—I see the Church of England surrounded and assisted by differing, but respectful, and no longer hostile

sects, extending the light of truth to the remotest regions of the earth ; and when to these considerations we add the wonderful preservation of the independence and constitution of this nation for so many years of impending danger, amidst the ruin which has swallowed up all the surrounding states, may we not indulge the hope that the religion of this nation is a portion of that Church, against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail ; and this country a favored instrument of Providence in effecting its most sublime and beneficent designs ?

It is indeed an important crisis for the Church of England. Greatness and glory wait on her decision one way—I forbear to state the consequences of the contrary decision which you would recommend ; for I trust the Church *has already decided*, and that the triumphs of the Bible Society, which you already compare to the enthusiasm of the crusades, are but the prelude to more extensive triumphs ; when this nation shall indeed *take up the cross*—to carry not the sword, but the Saviour, throughout the world, and when you will be, I trust, not the last to cast away your unfounded apprehensions, and to hail with unmingled satisfaction the opening of a new æra of light and truth.

I have been led to trouble you at somewhat greater length than I intended ; nor should I perhaps have thought it necessary to offer any thing further to the public on this subject, had I been aware, when I began to write, that other answers to your Inquiry were preparing by men much more competent than myself to enter into all the details connected with the question ; or if I had seen the observations already published in one of our ablest periodical works.<sup>1</sup>

What effect may be produced on your mind by my arguments, or by those of others, I cannot pretend to foresee ;

<sup>1</sup> See the British Review, No. V.

but both for your conviction, and that of the portion of the public who may still be unconvinced, I principally rely on that experience of the innocence and the importance of the Society, which has already acquired so much force, and which I trust every day will strengthen.

I am ever, &c.

(Signed) N. VANSITTART.

*Great George Street,  
23d March 1812.*









